



*Evaluation of the
English Access Microscholarship Program*

FINAL REPORT

December 2007

Prepared for:

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Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program Description & History

The English Access Microscholarship Program provides non-elite 14 to 18 year old students in 44 countries with significant Muslim populations English language instruction through a U.S.-style classroom experience. The overarching goals of the Program are for students to gain an appreciation for American culture and democratic values, acquire sufficient English language skills to increase their ability to successfully participate in the socio-economic development of their countries, and improve their chances of participation in future U.S. educational and exchange programs.

The first Access Program began in Casablanca, Morocco, in May 2003 with 17 students. In January 2004, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) formally inaugurated the Program. Since its inception, the Access Program has received funding from ECA, the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (R), and regional Public Diplomacy (PD) bureaus. In October 2005, the Office of English Language Programs in ECA assumed central management and funding responsibility of the Access Program. At the local level, Access programs are managed directly by Public Affairs Sections (PAS) with assistance from ECA and Regional English Language Officers (RELOs).

Effectiveness of the Access Program

This section details the effectiveness of the Access Program in meeting the following programmatic goals:

- 1) provide a significant English language learning experience to students in a cost-effective manner (approximately \$1,000 per student) to maximize the number of students reached;
- 2) provide direct English teaching to non-elite students living in underserved neighborhoods;
- 3) engage in the design and implementation of a transparent Access student selection process; and
- 4) recognize student achievement through award certificates signed by the U.S. Ambassador.

Significant English Language Learning Experience Although programs varied widely in the number of hours of instruction and their duration, most programs include two years of instruction ranging from 240 to 640 classroom hours. This length is deemed sufficient by Access local administrators and teachers to provide students with a significant learning experience and advance one or more levels in their English language proficiency. Access students surveyed are proud of their English acquisition and mentioned that they could participate in English conversations, obtain better jobs, understand English-language websites, and apply to college or university due to their new ability.

Cost-Effectiveness—The Access Program is a cost-effective program. The average cost per student in the six countries surveyed for FY 2004 was \$1011.38 and for FY 2005 was \$917.71. The spread of per student cost during FY 2005 between \$138 at one site in India and the \$1,785 at two sites in Oman is attributable to the type of in-country educational service provider, the facility infrastructure, student transportation costs, and the relative cost of living in the various countries.

Intended Population—In all of the countries evaluated, the students served by the Access Program

are considered to be non-elite by standards of the country. Most of the programs are based in underserved urban areas. Morocco and Lebanon, at the time of this evaluation, had expanded their programs to include rural communities as well.

Student Selection Process—The Access Program has a transparent student selection process involving a written assessment of the applicant’s writing skills, an entrance test, and/or an interview with the program administrator and teachers. In some cases, several programs maintain waiting lists of students who completed the assessment process but were not selected for the Program. Students from these lists are invited to join the Program if others are unable to complete the Program.

Award Certificates—Students in the countries surveyed in the SCA region received award certificates at the beginning of the program, while students in the countries surveyed in the NEA region received their certificates at the completion of the program. In both cases, the award is signed by the U.S. Ambassador or his/her designee.

Evaluation Findings

Views of the United States

- The Access Program improved the views of students towards the American people and the U.S. Government; the overwhelming majority (**87.5%**) report a more favorable or much more favorable view of the **American people**; and more than half (**54.3%**) report a more favorable or much more favorable view of the **U.S. Government**.
- More than half of the Access students (**64.0%**) agree or strongly agree that the United States is a trustworthy partner for their countries.

“Before the Access Program ... I had kind of a negative image about [Americans], but after joining the Program ... I have a very different view.”

- Access student in Morocco

Language Acquisition & Improved Academic Performance

- The overwhelming majority of Access students rated the English skills they developed due to the Access Program as good or excellent in the following categories: **91.8%** in reading; **85%** in writing; **84%** in speaking; **83.5%** in understanding spoken English; and **77.7%** in grammar.
- Almost all students, **92.7%**, felt that the Access Program helped them in their regular school courses (**94.4%** - SCA and **90.4%** - NEA).

In today’s world, we need to know English to communicate with others, and so when the U.S. State Department offered us help to learn English, we were overwhelmed....”

- Access student in Bangladesh

Knowledge of the United States

- More than half of Access students reported having at least basic knowledge of freedom of speech and the press (**60.2%**); daily life in the United States (**56.0%**); U.S. values and culture

(55.1%); and religious and ethnic diversity in the U.S. (51.6%) due to the Program.

- More than half of the Access parents (66.9%) believed that their children gained a greater understanding of U.S. culture or society through the Access Program.

"If I compare my knowledge [of the U.S.] now and before the Access Program, I think that now I know much more information ... through our direct contact with Americans, we have had the chance to discover a new culture and traditions."

- Access student in Morocco

Sharing Knowledge About English and the United States

- An overwhelming majority of Access students reported sharing knowledge from the Access classes with parents, siblings, and peers (94.4% - SCA; 84.5% - NEA).
- 73.0% of Access parents reported that their own English language skills have improved since their child started in the Access Program; and 81.0% reported being motivated to learn English due to their child's progress in learning English.

"Every night after the end of the class, I go home and share with my family all the things I learned."

- Access student in Oman

Democratic Principles

- At least 90.0% of Access students stated that they support democratic principles, including rule of law, equal rights under the law, the importance of voting, and free and fair elections.

"[We learned] about democracy; before this we only knew about Pakistani culture, but now we know about Americans...[and] their culture."

- Access student in Pakistan

Leadership Skills & Professional Development

- More than 80% of Access students believe they have developed good or excellent leadership skills due to the Program.
- 91.0% of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the relevance of the Program to their professional or educational development.

"After completing the Access Program, I would like to study for three years in the university, major in English literature, and I hope to have the chance later to go for higher education in the United States."

- Access student in Morocco

Evaluation Purpose & Goals

In September 2005, the Office of Policy and Evaluation (ECA/P) within the U.S. Department of State selected the Aguirre Division of JBS International, Inc. to conduct a pilot evaluation of the English Access Microscholarship Program. The pilot evaluation studied the Access Program in three countries in the Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) region—Morocco, Lebanon, and Oman—and three countries in the South and Central Asia (SCA) region—India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. The evaluation goals set out by ECA/P were to: collect data from students, administrators, and teachers to better manage the Program; assess initial impact of the Access Program on students and their families; determine if the Access Programs in Morocco, Lebanon, Oman, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are meeting ECA goals; provide suggestions for refinement of the goals and standards for the Access Program; and provide recommendations for worldwide management and monitoring guidelines.

Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation incorporated both a formative evaluation component and a retrospective assessment of the Access Program in six countries. Data collection consisted of quantitative and qualitative methods, i.e., in-depth individual interviews, survey questionnaires, focus groups, discussion groups, and classroom observations. Data were gathered from PAS staff, RELOs, Access Program administrators/principals, selection committee members, teachers, students, peers of students, and parents of students.

Field work was conducted in 27 Access schools and centers in April and May of 2006. Interviews and survey protocols were conducted in English and in six local languages—Arabic, Bangla/Bengali, Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, and Urdu (according to the preference of the student, peer, or parent). In addition, field work included 19 class observations and 13 student focus groups/discussion groups. The evaluation team surveyed 613 students, 137 peers, 136 parents, 35 teachers, and 21 administrators (see Table 1). The evaluation had 942 total study respondents. In addition, the evaluation conducted interviews with PAS staff in New Delhi (India), Chennai (India), Dhaka (Bangladesh), Lahore (Pakistan), Rabat (Morocco), Beirut (Lebanon), and Muscat (Oman), along with four RELOs

Table 1: Sample Survey Numbers						
	Students	Peers	Parents	Teachers	Administrators	TOTAL
NEA Region						
Lebanon	83	20	20	4	4	131
Morocco	102	25	26	4	4	161
Oman	86	11	9	5	5	116
Regional Total	271	56	55	13	13	408
SCA Region						
Bangladesh	55	N/A*	N/A*	4	1	60
India	157	49	48	12	3	269
Pakistan	130	32	33	6	4	205
Regional Total	342	81	81	22	8	534
TOTAL	613	137	136	35	21	942

* Peers and parents were not interviewed in Bangladesh at the request of U.S. Embassy Dhaka.

Aguirre Division, JBS International, Inc.

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Policy and Evaluation, Evaluation Division

Overall Evaluation Conclusions

PAS Program Management—One of the hallmarks of the Access Program is the significant flexibility Public Affairs Sections have in choosing the in-country educational service providers that are appropriate and relevant to local needs and conditions in the participating countries. This important factor contributes to the success of the Access Program.

In-country Educational Service Providers—The Access Program is based upon the professional knowledge the Public Affairs Sections have of in-country educational service providers, which include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), commercial language centers, universities, and schools. The in-country educational service provider, in many cases, is responsible for selecting the final curriculum, class structure, and the teachers. Therefore, the provider's knowledge of English teaching methods is extremely important to the quality of the Program.

High Quality English Teachers—Teachers are the linchpin in delivering quality instruction. The teachers' command of English and ability to create a student-centered classroom environment affect the learning experience. For many students, the Access Program is the first experience they have with a participatory classroom experience and critical thinking skills. Therefore, the Program fills an educational gap beyond English proficiency. However, in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Oman, the shortage of qualified and experienced English teachers was mentioned by the Program administrators, principals, PAS staff, and RELOs. Identifying qualified teachers will be very important for the Program's expansion in many countries.

Awareness of U.S. Government Sponsorship—The sponsorship of the Program—as a U.S.-funded program called English Access Microscholarship Program—is well-established in most centers and schools. Most students and parents, were aware that the Access Program is funded by the U.S. Government. In some programs, students receive mugs, t-shirts, bags, or baseball caps emblazoned with “Access Program” and refer to the program as “Access” or “Access Program.” However, during the course of this evaluation, some students, teachers, and administrators reported that the Program was provided by the in-country educational service provider or by the government of their country.

Alumni Involvement—At the time of data collection, Morocco was the only Access Program that had alumni. A group of alumni in Morocco was in the process of forming an alumni association in order to maintain their connections with other students and teachers from the Access Program. In Bangladesh, the top 10 Access students in the first cohort received scholarships from the Language Proficiency Center (a commercial language center) to continue in the center's regular English classes. In all six countries, Access students and alumni stated their interest in maintaining their connection with other students and teachers from the Access Program and continuing to learn English.

Materials—The administrators and teachers emphasized the difficulty of finding age-appropriate material at a beginning language level. In all six countries evaluated, the providers reported that they invested significantly in purchasing supplemental materials or adapting the curriculum to be more relevant to the cultural context of students.

"I really like our teacher's system. He always starts by talking about the things we have done during the weekend or holidays. He always creates a discussion and finds ways to make things interesting and entertaining."

- Access student in Morocco

Recommendations

Expand the Access Program—This evaluation demonstrated the effectiveness of the Access Program in providing youth significant English language learning and increasing appreciation of U.S. culture and values in a cost-effective manner. This evidence provides compelling justification for expanding the Access Program beyond the current 44 countries and increasing the number of Access students worldwide.

Maintain Program Adaptability and Flexibility—Every Access school and center recommended that the Access Program maintain its flexibility in order to respond to the needs and constraints of the local communities. The Program's flexibility has been a hallmark since its inception and should be preserved in order to permit posts and administrators to custom-design locally-relevant components of the Program.

Continue Awareness of the U.S. Government Sponsorship—Consistent awareness of the U.S. Government sponsorship of the Access Program is important for meeting the mission and goals of the Program. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents should know that the Access Program is a U.S. government-funded program designed to improve English language skills and expose students to U.S. culture and values. Visits from the Ambassador, Foreign Service Officers, and other Americans to Access schools and centers foster heightened interest and enthusiasm among students, teachers, and administrators.

Continue Development of Structures to Encourage and Maintain Contact with Alumni—Wherever feasible, an Access alumni club or group should be established in each country. Over time an online Access alumni network could be established. This would reinforce program awareness of U.S. Government sponsorship, help students who complete the Program maintain their English, and provide a sense of community to the students of the Program.

Increase In-Country In-Service Training or Enhancement Workshops for Access Teachers—Many teachers expressed strong interest in participating in in-country in-service teacher training workshops on best practices and innovative U.S.-style teaching methods. Many teachers would benefit from additional exposure to U.S. culture and values, access to a kit of resource materials on the United States, and/or a video on life in the United States.

Begin Access Classes at Fourteen Years of Age—Give serious consideration to the timing of the Access Program and begin the Program at the ages of 14 to 15. In some cases, Access students ages 17 to 18 were studying for important national exams, and absenteeism became a problem; some schools and centers suspended the Access classes until after the exams.

Utilize Existing Course Materials for Access Classrooms—The publications and materials available on the website of the *English as a Foreign Language Publication Catalog*—(<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/pubs>)—should be made known to the wider audience of Access teachers and administrators, as a supplemental resource.

Provide Opportunities for Cross-Fertilization of Programs—All Public Affairs Officers and the Office of English Language Programs should arrange opportunities for Access programs to share their models, their challenges, and their successes. In addition, Access programs should encourage Access students to participate in future U.S. educational and exchange programs.

Contact Information

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION

This section of the report provides information on the purpose and goals of the pilot evaluation of the English Access Microscholarship Program (Access Program) and the goals of the Program itself as set forth by legislation and directive from the Office of Policy and Evaluation (ECA/P) of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in the Office of the Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

A. Purpose of the Access Program Evaluation and Evaluation Goals

The pilot evaluation of the English Access Microscholarship Program is a study of the Program as it functions in select countries in the Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) and South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA) regions. The U.S. Department of State's Office of Policy and Evaluation (ECA/P) administered the Access Program pilot evaluation and was the primary point of contact for the evaluation contractor, Aguirre Division of JBS International, Inc. The evaluation goals set out by the ECA/P were the documentation of initial Program outcomes, impact, and best practices, and a plan for future program development, standards, monitoring and management. The evaluator's objectives were the following.

- **Develop Baseline Information:** Collect credible and current data about Access Program participants, alumni, administrators, peers and partners to better manage the Access Program and performance; assess initial impact of Program on participants and participants' families. This includes information on the selection of participants, selection and monitoring of partners, and existing measures used to test or otherwise determine English language ability and progress of participants.
- **Measure Achievement of the Access Program:** Determine if Access Program is meeting its goals as stated in original cable to Posts; provide suggestions for refinement of goals and standards for the Access Program; and assess how various Access programs collaborate with related public diplomacy initiatives.
- **Provide Recommendations:** Provide recommendations for worldwide Access Program management and monitoring guidelines.

This is being referred to as a pilot evaluation because it was both formative and retrospective; it was designed to gather information about what has been done in order to inform future Program management decisions, and does not represent the full impact this Program will have over time. In addition to examining the participants' progress in building language skills, the evaluation sought to assess the extent to which the Program promoted mutual understanding between people of the United States and those in other countries. Another level of the evaluation looked at the personal and professional skills that students gained from participation in the Program.

Fieldwork and data collection took place in Lebanon, Morocco, and Oman in the NEA region and Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan in the SCA region during the months of April, May and June of

2006. The evaluation was designed to take into consideration differences in the ways the countries and institutions implement the Program. Site visit locations were selected in consultation with the Posts and/or Regional English Language Officers (RELOs) to reflect countrywide conditions, as well as best practices. In addition, all interview protocols included both closed-ended and open-ended questions to give Program participants and stakeholders the opportunity to provide the details of the local context and the unique features of their respective programs. Finally, adjustments were made on the ground in terms of data collection to account for local sensitivities (these are discussed in detail in Appendix A: Evaluation Methodology).

The data collection consisted of quantitative and qualitative methods: individual interviews, survey questionnaires, focus groups, group discussions, and classroom observations. Data were obtained from Public Affairs Sections (PAS) staff, RELOs, Program administrators, principals, teachers, participants, peers, and family members.

B. Goals of the English Access Microscholarship Program

1. Governing Act Goals

The legislative mandate under which the English Access Microscholarship Program is authorized by Public Law 87-256, the *Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961*, also known as the *Fulbright-Hays Act*. The purpose of the Fulbright-Hays Act is to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange. The goals of the Act are:

- To increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries;
- To strengthen the ties that unite people of the United States with other nations;
- To promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement; and
- To assist in the development of “friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world.”

2. Access Programmatic Goals

The English Access Microscholarship Program provides non-elite 14 to 18 year old students in 44 countries with significant Muslim populations English language instruction through a U.S.-style classroom experience. The overarching goals of the Program are for students to gain an appreciation for American culture and democratic values, acquire sufficient English language skills to increase their ability to successfully participate in the socio-economic development of their countries, and improve their chances of participation in future U.S. educational and exchange programs.

The first Access Program began in Casablanca, Morocco, in May 2003 with 17 students. In January 2004, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) formally inaugurated the Program. Since its inception, the Access Program has received funding from ECA, the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (R), and regional Public Diplomacy (PD) bureaus. In October 2005, the Office of English Language Programs in ECA assumed central management and funding responsibility of the Access

Program. At the local level, Access programs are managed directly by Public Affairs Sections (PAS) with assistance from ECA and Regional English Language Officers (RELOs).

Since the Program's inception, English teaching schools and language centers selected by U.S. Embassies in 44 countries have enrolled approximately 20,000 in the English Access Microscholarship Program.

Access students are enrolled in the Program in the following regions and countries:

- **Africa:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Togo
- **East Asia and the Pacific:** Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, and Thailand
- **Europe:** Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia, and Turkey
- **Near Eastern Asia:** Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, West Bank, Gaza, and Yemen
- **South and Central Asia:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

The following programmatic goals were set out for all Access programs:

- The Program should provide a significant English language learning experience to students in a cost-effective manner (approximately \$1,000 per student).
- The Program should provide direct English teaching to non-elite students living in underserved urban neighborhoods with significant non-Arab Muslim populations.
- Posts should be engaged in the design and implementation of a transparent participant selection process.
- All scholarship recipients should receive an award certificate signed by the Ambassador.
- Posts are responsible for Program oversight, including setting up a participant database that contains name, age, gender, country, city, level of English attained and participant reaction to the Program, and for the development of mechanisms that prevent fraud or mismanagement of funds.

Public Affairs Sections were to establish locally appropriate mechanisms to recruit for and manage the Program. Whenever possible, the Program was intended to offer English classes that provide exposure to a U.S.-style educational experience and use teaching materials promoting balanced views and accurate information about the United States.

The model Program was described as a partnership with a non-profit English language institution which is clearly identified with the United States and which can accept a group of 20 (or more) students from one or more local secondary schools in underserved urban areas. Where no such institutions exist, U.S. Embassies and Consulates were encouraged to develop alternative models. Each Embassy or Consulate was given latitude to determine, in accordance with budgetary restrictions and the guidelines above, what constitutes a significant English learning experience.

Procedures were to be established to ensure a transparent selection process that drew exclusively from non-elite secondary school youth in underserved urban areas. The U.S. Embassy or

Consulate was to tailor selection criteria and administrative arrangements with in-country educational service providers according to local circumstances. While U.S. Embassies and Consulates were to seek to maximize participation of Muslim students via selection of schools or neighborhoods from which candidates would be recruited, decisions on individual scholarship recipients were not to be based on their religious affiliation.

3. Access Program Management and Funding Centralization

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' Office of English Language Programs assumed management and funding responsibility for the English Access Microscholarship Program in October 2005, becoming part of the Office of English Language Programs portfolio of core initiatives and programs. In 2006, AMIDEAST received a grant to administer the English Access Microscholarship Program through a cooperative agreement with ECA. At the local level, Access programs are managed directly by Public Affairs Sections (PAS) with assistance from ECA and Regional English Language Officers (RELOs). Funding for the Program is provided by the U.S. Congress under Public Law 87-256, the *Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961*, also known as the *Fulbright-Hays Act*.

a. High-Profile Public Diplomacy Initiative

The English Access Microscholarship Program affords non-elite, 14 to 18 year old students in countries with significant Muslim populations the chance to learn English. The Program is a high profile, public diplomacy initiative that provides participating U.S. Embassies and Consulates an opportunity to demonstrate tangibly our country's dedication to education and mutual understanding. The Program also is very cost effective; many U.S. Embassies and Consulates posts use a guideline of \$1,000 per student for two years of instruction.

b. U.S. Culture and American English

In addition to teaching English, the Program's other primary goal is to give students an understanding of U.S. culture and values, with an emphasis on democratic principles and civic engagement. In each country, U.S. Embassy and Consulate personnel are encouraged to supplement and enrich the students' learning experience by appearing as guest speakers and organizing enhancement activities such as picnics, field trips, etc. The cost of enhancement activities may be included in the budget. A transportation allowance for students may also be included. Some Embassies were able to include the participation of an English Language Fellow (EL Fellow) to strengthen both the pedagogical and the U.S. cultural component of the Access Program classes. Moreover, as a symbol of the U.S. Embassy's sustained engagement and commitment to their success, every Access student receives a certificate signed by the U.S. Ambassador at the beginning and end of the Program.

c. Key Role of Public Affairs Sections

Public Affairs Sections are intimately involved in the management of the Access Program. Because Public Affairs Sections adapt the Program to local institutions and culture, many of the Program's features (the number of hours of classroom instruction, for example) vary considerably from country to country. The Public Affairs Sections:

- Choose the students who participate in the Program.

- Recommend to the Office of English Language Programs which in-country educational service provider (school, institute, NGO, etc.) is best qualified to administer the Program.
- Arrange press coverage for Program-related activities.
- Ensure that the Program is consistently identified as a U.S. Department of State-sponsored initiative/program.
- Provide Program oversight, including creating a database that contains the participants' name, age, gender, city, level of English attained, and reaction to the Program.
- Develop mechanisms that prevent fraud or mismanagement of funds.
- Chronicle participants' reactions to the Program and attitudes toward the United States.
- Seek opportunities to forge public/private, Embassy/corporate partnerships to fund more microscholarships and/or enhancement activities, such as in-country language immersion camps.

C. Overview of Evaluation Methodology

In order to examine the various objectives relating to the English Access Microscholarship Program, initial Program outcomes and impact, and best practices and recommendations for improvement, the Aguirre evaluation team, working closely with the ECA/P Evaluation Officers, formulated a program logic model, which identified key inputs and expected outcomes of the Program. Questions from each of the evaluation protocols were then mapped to the logic model to guide the analysis of the data collected in the field.

The Access Program evaluation employed several data collection strategies in order to examine the outcomes related to selected indicators and measurements:

- Guided discussions for one-on-one interviews with U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulate staff, Public Affairs Section staff, Cultural Affairs Office staff, and Access Program Selection Committee members
- One-on-one interviews with Regional English Language Officers
- One-on-one interviews with Program administrators and in-country educational service providers
- One-on-one interviews with Access Program school principals and center directors
- One-on-one interviews with Access Program teachers and coordinators
- Interview surveys with Access Program participants and alumni
- Interview surveys with parents of Access Program participants and alumni
- Interview surveys with peers of Access Program participants
- Focus Groups with Access Program participants
- Observations of Access classes

The Request for Proposal identified the countries to be visited for this evaluation: Morocco, Lebanon and Oman in the NEA region, and India, Bangladesh and Pakistan in the SCA region. Decisions on the location of site visits for the study were made collaboratively with the NEA and SCA Regional Offices, the Regional English Language Officers, and the U.S. Embassies and Consulates in the respective countries. As the planning for the evaluation progressed, some of the original schools and centers proposed for site visits were replaced by other sites due to efficiencies as well as recommendations by the U.S. Embassies and Consulates based on changing sensitivities on the ground. The cities and towns that the evaluation team visited in each country as well as the in-country educational service providers in each location are found in Table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1 Site Visit Locations and In-country Educational Service Providers		
NEA Region		
Lebanon	Halba, Tripoli, Tyre, Jib Jannine	AMIDEAST
Morocco	Casablanca, Rabat, Fes, Meknes	AMIDEAST American Language Centers (ALC)
Oman	Muscat, Al-Hail, Salalah, Al-Buraimi	English Language Centre (ELC) ELS Language Centers (ELS) Al-Buraimi College
SCA Region		
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Language Proficiency Center (LPC)
India	New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Chennai	Jamia Millia Islamia Society for Promotion of Rational Thinking (SPRAT) Anjuman-e-Himayath-e-Islam
Pakistan	Lahore	CARE Foundation

1. In-Country Research Organizations

Aguirre subcontracted with U.S.-based organizations that had on-the-ground contacts in the regions to carry out the in-country work of the evaluation. The Amr Group coordinated the evaluation in the NEA region and the McKinley Group worked in the SCA region. The McKinley Group coordinated the work of local organizations in the SCA region: Insights and Ideas in Bangladesh, Synovate Inc. in India, and Oasis International in Pakistan. The Amr Group relied on staff and individuals with local expertise residing in the countries studied.

The research partners translated and piloted the survey protocols in local languages: India—Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Tamil, Bengali; Bangladesh—Bangla; Pakistan—Urdu; Morocco, Lebanon and Oman—Arabic. The partners provided Aguirre with feedback on the questionnaire piloting, and protocols were revised accordingly.

Data collection in-country took place between April 18 and June 30, 2006. The research partners coordinated field visits by Aguirre staff and consultants, made appointments for interviews and school visits, arranged for classroom observations, conducted participant focus groups, and conducted in-country interviews with Access teachers, participants, parents, and peers.

The sub-contractors in each region coded and data-entered completed survey instruments, translated open-ended responses, and then forwarded them to Aguirre for data cleaning and analysis.

2. Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted in-country with eight Public Affairs Sections (PAS) staff members in the NEA region and nine PAS staff members in the SCA region. In the United States, the evaluation team interviewed four RELOs, three from the NEA region and one from the SCA region.

The interviews provided context for the Access Program and further information on its overall goals and aspirations. These interviews provided information on how the Access Program had varied in its conception and initial implementation in each country. The interviews were also helpful in providing information on specific implementation decisions, on selection procedures, and on plans for English-language programming in each country (see Appendix C: Protocols and Quantitative Data Tables, for the interview protocols).

3. Surveys

Survey protocols were administered one-on-one and consisted of both close-ended and open-ended questions. In the case of Morocco, Lebanon and Pakistan, Access students were selected randomly from a list of participants provided by the Posts and supplemented or revised by the local implementers. In the case of Oman, India and Bangladesh, local considerations did not allow for random sampling of Access students and adjustments were made to accommodate either U.S. Embassy concerns or implementer constraints (see Appendix A: Evaluation Methodology, for details). For this evaluation, 613 surveys were administered to Access participants, 271 in the NEA region and 342 in the SCA region.

In addition to the Access participants, the evaluation team conducted surveys with Access peers and parents in Morocco, Lebanon, Oman, India and Pakistan. Peers and parents were not surveyed in Bangladesh at the request of the U.S. Embassy. Parent interviews were also excluded in Chennai, India, as the Access students there live at a boarding school without parental care. Parents of Access students were selected randomly from the list of Access participants selected for the student survey, except in New Delhi, India where the Access administrator recruited parents to participate in the survey. Overall, 136 parents of Access students were interviewed, 55 in the NEA region and 81 in the SCA region.

Peers of Access students were selected through the interviews with the Access participants. Each participant was asked to provide the name of one peer that the evaluation team could interview, except in Oman and Bangladesh. The lists of peers then were compiled for each city, and a random sample was selected. In Oman, peers were selected by the Access administrators. In Bangladesh, no peer interviews were conducted at the request of the U.S. Embassy. The team interviewed 81 peers in the SCA region and 56 peers in the NEA region, 137 in total.

Aguirre evaluators trained local researchers to administer the survey protocols in order to allow respondents to be interviewed in their native languages. Section D, Characteristics of Evaluation Participants and Stakeholders, discusses the number of individuals in each stakeholder category that were surveyed in the six countries.

When analyzing the responses of the surveys, the team produced cross-tabulations of the data by gender, country, region, and type of program (integrated versus Access-only). The team examined the results by region as well as by country. The team also used the information collected in site visits to corroborate the results of the data analysis. For variables that were used in the participant, peer, and parent surveys, the team compared the data and noted any anomalies that could not be explained. To view the protocols or the full report of quantitative data findings, see Appendix C: Protocols and Quantitative Data Tables.

4. Focus Groups

A total of 13 participant focus groups were conducted for this study: seven in the NEA region and six in the SCA region.

In each country visited, local research partners facilitated the focus groups in the local language and provided translation and transcripts of the sessions. In some cases, the focus groups were conducted in English at the request of the Access students (e.g., Lebanon, Morocco, and some in India). The sessions were audio-recorded and/or video-recorded. The focus groups comprised Access participants and alumni. In some focus group sessions, the participants were mixed boy and girl groups; in other instances, the focus groups were single-sex. Most focus groups were held in the schools or centers where the Access classes occur (see Appendix C: Protocols and Quantitative Data Tables, for the focus group protocol).

5. Site Visits

The evaluation assessed the views and experiences of stakeholders in six countries as specified in the Request for Proposal. Aguirre staff, accompanied by its local partners, visited twelve Access Program schools and language centers in the Near Eastern Affairs region in the countries of Lebanon, Morocco, and Oman, and six schools and centers in the South and Central Asia region in the countries of India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.

These site visits included interviews with school administrators, program managers, and teachers, in addition to the surveys conducted with students and alumni, parents, and peers. The site visits also included observation of Access classes and lessons of the current Access students, and focus groups or discussion groups were held during the site visits.

If Aguirre staff were unable to conduct all the site visits in the time allotted (due to class schedules or other constraints), Aguirre staff conducted the first several site visits with a local expert. This arrangement served to train the local expert to make additional site visits to selected schools without the Aguirre evaluator, to observe how the site visits were to be conducted and to learn how various outcomes were to be documented. By delegating some of the site visits from more costly international specialists to local researchers, the Access evaluation strengthened the research capacity of local experts and organizations.

6. Classroom Observations

A total of 19 classroom observations were conducted for this study: eight in the NEA region and 11 in the SCA region. Using a classroom observation protocol, Aguirre evaluators and local researchers visited Access classrooms in session to observe and record information about the classroom facilities, materials, class composition, organization, instructional methods, and student-teacher interaction. Observations were conducted in classes with a mix of boys and girls, as well as single-sex classes (see Appendix C: Protocols and Quantitative Data Tables, for the observation form).

7. Length of Protocols

The survey instruments varied in length by stakeholder groups. The shortest interview was the parent interview containing 24 questions. This interview lasted an average of 30 minutes. The questionnaire for the Access peers contained 34 questions and required, on average, 30 minutes

to administer. Surveys of Access participants contained 59 questions, many of which were closed-ended, and took, on average, 45 minutes to administer. The surveys for administrators and teachers required, on average, one hour and 30 minutes to administer and contained 71 questions.

The student and peer interview protocols were shorter in Oman (see Appendix C: Protocols and Quantitative Data Tables) due to the request of the Ministry of Education to remove questions deemed to be sensitive and unrelated to the Program (i.e., opinions on democracy, etc.). This, in effect, reduced the participant protocol to 51 questions and the peer protocol to 27 questions.

For additional information about the English Access Microscholarship Program evaluation methodology and country adjustments, please see Appendix A: Evaluation Methodology.

D. Characteristics of Evaluation Participants and Stakeholders

This section provides a brief description of the individuals interviewed for the Access Program evaluation, including Access participants, peers, parents, teachers, administrators, and selection committee members. A more detailed description can be found in Appendix B: Demographics.

1. Participants

Access Program participants were interviewed in all six countries evaluated, achieving a total of 613 participants interviews. Participants were divided into current participants and Access alumni who had completed the Program. In the NEA region, 17 alumni were interviewed in Morocco, eight in Oman, and 37 in Lebanon. In the SCA region, nine Program alumni were interviewed from Bangladesh. There were no alumni in India or Pakistan because the Access Program had not completed classes for the year. The total numbers of current and completed Access participants are shown in Table 1.2, disaggregated by country and region.

TABLE 1.2			
Status of Access Program Participants			
Countries	Current Access Participants	Access Alumni	Total Sample
Lebanon	46	37*	83
Morocco	85	17	102
Oman	78	8	86
NEA Regional Total	209	62	271
Bangladesh	46	9**	55
India	157	---	157
Pakistan	130	---	130
SCA Regional Total	333	9	342
Total	542	71	613

*Lebanon students completed their first year and are now continuing the Program after a hiatus.

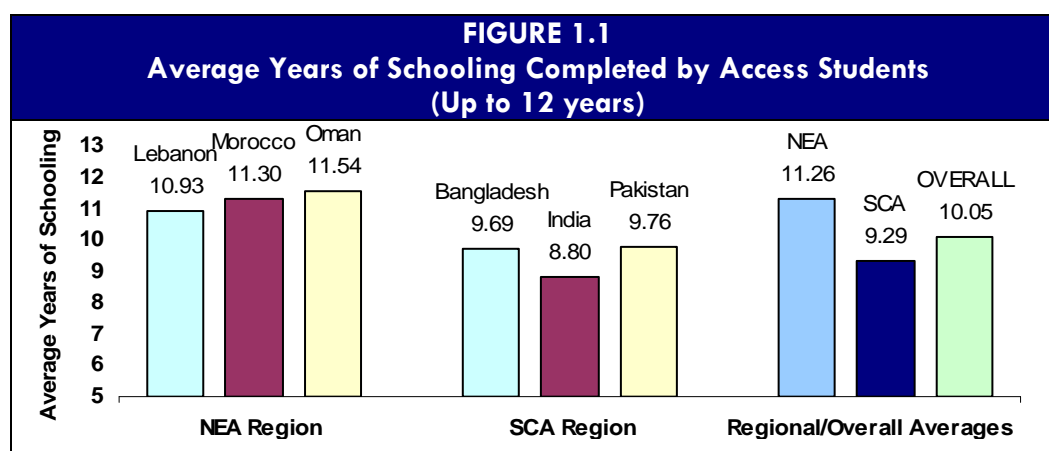
**These alumni were second-year students at the time of the site visit and their individual interviews were not completed until after the Program ended.

The Access participants and alumni interviewed were distributed evenly by gender. Both in the NEA and SCA regions, the evaluators were able to interview roughly equal percentages of female and male students. The highest percentages of female students interviewed were in

Lebanon (59.0%) and Bangladesh (58.2%). The highest percentages of male students interviewed were in India (58.6%) and Pakistan (57.7%), as illustrated by Table 1.3.

Countries	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total Sample (n)
Lebanon	41.0	59.0	83
Morocco	44.1	55.9	102
Oman	48.8	51.2	86
NEA Regional Average	44.6	55.4	271
Bangladesh	41.8	58.2	55
India	58.6	41.4	157
Pakistan	57.7	42.3	130
SCA Regional Average	55.6	44.4	342
Overall Average	50.7	49.3	613

To provide some framework for understanding their educational backgrounds, Access participants were asked how many years of schooling they had completed. Students interviewed in the NEA region, on average, had completed 11.26 years of schooling. The SCA regional average of students interviewed was lower at 9.29 years completed. Figure 1.1 shows the average years of schooling by country and region.¹



Total Samples: NEA region – 204: Lebanon – 67, Morocco – 63, Oman – 74
 SCA region – 326: Bangladesh – 48, India – 155, Pakistan – 123
 Overall – 530

Part of the difference in years of schooling attained may be attributed to variations in each country's selection criteria for the Program, but it is also related to the relative ages of the Access participants. The average age of students in the NEA region was higher than that in the SCA region. While nearly 60 percent of the participants in the NEA region were 18 years or older,² a majority of the participants in the SCA region (61.1%) were between the ages of 14 and 17.

¹ In the NEA region, 67 respondents had completed more than twelve years of schooling: 16 in Lebanon, 39 in Morocco, 12 in Oman. In the SCA region, 16 respondents had completed more than twelve years of schooling: 7 in Bangladesh, 2 in India, 7 in Pakistan.

² The higher average age in the NEA Region is a reflection of the Oman Access Program, which included an older category of students in their cooperation with the Ministry of Manpower.

One of the differences seen across the two regions was the location of Access Program sites (see in Table 1.4). This question (“What school do you attend for regular classes?”) was only asked of current Access students. While most NEA participants attended their Access Program classes outside of their regular school (66.0%),³ most of the SCA participants attended Access classes in their regular schools (59.8%), usually after school hours. The exception was in Bangladesh, where the students attended Access classes at the Language Proficiency Center, which was located outside of the regular school facility.

TABLE 1.4 Location of Access Program Classes*			
Countries	In Student's Regular School (%)	Outside Student's Regular School (%)	Total Sample (n)
Lebanon	69.6	30.4	46
Morocco	0.0	100.0	85
Oman	50.0	50.0	78
NEA Regional Average	34.0	66.0	209
Bangladesh	19.6	80.4	46
India	74.5	25.5	157
Pakistan	56.2	43.8	130
SCA Regional Average	59.8	40.2	342
Overall Average	49.8	50.2	542

*This question was only asked of current Access students.

Access participants were also asked how far along they were in the Program. Most of the participants in the NEA region were just completing their first year, including 90.7 percent of students in Oman. In Morocco, 49 percent of the students were in their second year of instruction. At the SCA regional level, the participants were equally divided among those in their first and second years of instruction. However, a closer look at the country percentages shows that most students in Bangladesh (63.6%) and India (65.6%) were in their first year of instruction, while 74.6 percent of students in Pakistan were in their second year of instruction.

2. Peers

Peers of Access participants were interviewed by the evaluators in five countries, all but Bangladesh, in order to compare the understanding and knowledge of students not associated with the Access Program. Peers were not interviewed in Bangladesh upon the request of the U.S. Embassy (Dhaka). In most cases, the peers were friends of Access Program students or other youth in the community or schools who were available for interviews. In Oman, the peers were students who had been accepted into the Access Program, but had not yet begun their classes. The distribution of peers by gender can be seen in Table 1.5.

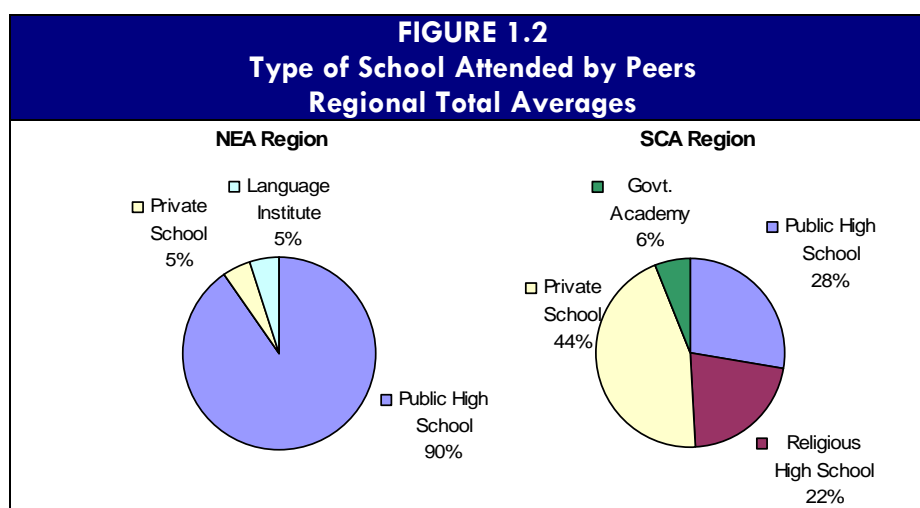
³ In Oman, fifty percent of the students reported that their Access classes were held in their regular schools, although all of the Access classes in Oman were held at private in-country educational service providers.

TABLE 1.5 Peer Demographics – Gender			
Countries	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total Sample (n)
Lebanon	35.0	65.0	20
Morocco	56.0	44.0	25
Oman	63.6	36.4	11
NEA Regional Average	50.0	50.0	56
Bangladesh*	---	---	---
India	56.3	48.3	48
Pakistan	68.8	31.3	32
SCA Regional Average	61.3	38.8	80
Overall Average	56.6	43.4	136

*Peers were not interviewed in Bangladesh per U.S. Embassy request.

Peers were asked if they were currently attending school, and 73.2 percent of peers interviewed in the NEA region responded that they were currently studying in school, as did 80.2 percent of peers in the SCA region. In a follow-up question, those attending school were asked if they were studying English language in school. At the NEA regional level, 92.7 percent of peers were studying English language. The regional average in the SCA region was 89.2 percent.

Those peers attending school were asked to state which kind of institution they attended. In Figure 1.2, the breakdown by school attendance of peers is depicted in a graphic format that illustrates how public school attendance in the NEA region (90%) compares with public high school attendance in the SCA region (28%). While most peers in the NEA region attend public high schools, a much larger percentage of the peers in the SCA region attend private schools (44%) or religious high schools (22%).



Total Samples: NEA region – 41, SCA region – 65*

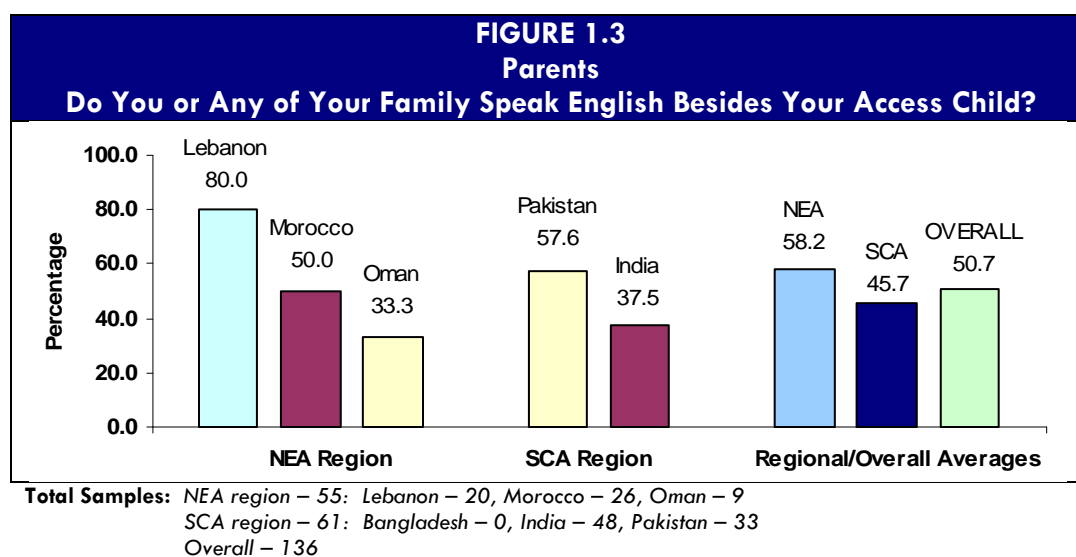
*Peers were not interviewed in Bangladesh per U.S. Embassy request.

Further, peers were asked how many years of schooling they had completed at the time of their interview to ensure they were reasonably comparable to the Access students. Most peers had completed approximately the same years of schooling to the Access participants: in the NEA region 10.9 years, compared to the Access students' 11.3 years, and 9.2 years in the SCA region compared to the Access students' 9.3 years.⁴

3. Parents of Access Students

Parents of Access participants were interviewed in order to gain greater depth of the environment and economic circumstances of the Access participants, and particularly to learn more about the opportunities to practice and learn English outside of the Access Program. Parents were not interviewed in Bangladesh upon the request of the U.S. Embassy (Dhaka). Furthermore, parents were not interviewed in Chennai, India, because the students were residents at a charitable boarding school that serves children without parental care.

Parents were asked if anyone in their family spoke English other than their child in the Access Program. In both the NEA and SCA regions, a majority of parents responded that they or some other family member speak English, except for the parents and family members of Access students in Oman (33.3%) and India (37.5%). The results by country and region can be seen in Figure 1.3.



*Parents were not interviewed in Bangladesh per U.S. Embassy request.

When asked how many relatives spoke English of those who answered “yes” to the previous question, most parents in both regions (62.5% in the NEA region and 54.1% in the SCA region) said one to two family members. The ability to speak English among family members was highest in Pakistan and Lebanon, with over half of the parents stating that three or more family members could speak English (57.9% in Pakistan and 56.3% in Lebanon).

The parents were asked to comment on the presence of English language in their homes in three media formats: radio, television and newspapers or other publications. The results showed that almost half of the families in the NEA and SCA regions (44.9%) listened to English radio programs

⁴ In the NEA region, 15 peers had completed more than 12 years of schooling: 2 in Lebanon, 12 in Morocco and 1 in Oman. In the SCA region, 6 peers had completed more than 12 years of schooling: 1 in India and 5 in Pakistan.

in the home. The presence of English television programs was very high, with viewing by 70.9 percent in the NEA region and 74.1 percent in the SCA region. A contrast in the two regions was found in the accessibility of English newspapers and other publications. Whereas in the NEA region, only 29.1 percent of parents stated that they had English publications in their home, in the SCA region, 64.2 percent of parents stated the same.

Most parents (74.5% in the NEA region, 58.0% in the SCA region) agreed that their children spoke or understood some English prior to their beginning the Access Program. Figures were lowest in Morocco and India, where a little over half of the parents (53.8% and 56.3%, respectively) reported that the students understood English prior to the Program.

4. Access Program Teachers

Access Program teachers were interviewed at Access sites in all six NEA and SCA countries. Thirteen teachers were interviewed in the NEA region and 22 teachers were interviewed in the SCA region. All Access teachers were asked what educational credentials they held, whether in English language training or in their general studies. Seven teachers held Bachelor's degrees and 13 held Master's degrees. Nine teachers also had English language teaching certificates and four teachers had English language training from institutions, such as the British Council, Kipling, or British Heritage.

Teaching experience varied among the Access teachers. Both regions had some quite experienced teachers, such as in Oman and India, where Access teachers averaged over ten years of experience. The country with the lowest average years of teaching experience was Bangladesh with 4.67 years.

5. Access Program Administrators

Twenty-one administrators were interviewed for the Access evaluation: thirteen from the NEA region (11 male and two female) and eight from the SCA region (two male and six female). The Access Program administrators were asked about their experience in administering language-teaching programs like the Access Program. The administrators in Lebanon reported the highest average years of experience (9.90 years), while those in Oman reported the lowest (1.48 years). Administrators in Lebanon were, on average, involved with the Access Program the longest (20.4 months), as well. The regional averages for the NEA and SCA regions were roughly the same, at 15.23 months and 15.29 months of Access involvement, respectively.

The administrators' experience in English language teaching varied across the two regions. In Lebanon, none of the administrators had English language backgrounds, because they were principals of local public high schools. In Oman, half of the administrators had experience in English language teaching, as they were administrators of fee-based English language teaching institutions. In the other countries, either all or most (66.7% in India) administrators interviewed had experience in English language teaching.

6. Access Selection Committees

Members of Access Selection Committees were interviewed in Lebanon, Morocco and India. Selection Committee members in Lebanon had participated twice in Access Program selections, in 2004 and 2005. In Morocco, the Selection Committee member had been involved only one time, in 2005. In India, the evaluation team interviewed several Selection Committee members from the

Anjuman-e-Himayath-e-Islam boarding school in Chennai, which included teachers, school administrators and school board members. All of the Selection Committee members were involved in selecting the Access Program students in both 2004 and 2005.

In Bangladesh, some sites in India, Oman and Pakistan, the participants were selected by the Access Program Administrators and PAS staff, typically using an entrance exam and interviews with potential candidates. Therefore, there were no additional committee members to interview.

2 ACCESS PROGRAM DESCRIPTION BY COUNTRY

A. NEA Region Program Summary

The table below summarizes the Access Program in the Near Eastern Affairs Region. The details of each Program are discussed in the sections that follow.

TABLE 2.1 NEA Region Program Summary			
	Morocco	Lebanon	Oman
Program Start Date	2003	2004	2004
Study Sites	Rabat, Casablanca, Fes, Meknes	Beirut, Tripoli, Halba, Jib Jannine, Tyre	Muscat, Salalah, Buraimi
Implementers	AMIDEAST, American Language Centers (ALCs)	Local Public High Schools; AMIDEAST (coordinator)	English Language Center, English Language Services, Al-Buraimi College, others
Ministries	Minimal involvement	Minimal involvement	Ministry of Education (50%) Ministry of Manpower (50%)
Course Duration & Total Class Hours	2 years; 240 total hours	2 years; 400 total hours	1 year (MOE); 4 months (MoMP); 320 total hours
Class Frequency & Timing	1x/week on Sundays; 2x/week after school; 3 hours/week	2x/week after school 5 hours/week	4x/week, 10 hours/wk (MOE); 5x/week, 20 hours/week (MoMP)
Class Size	12 – 18 students	26 – 28 students (including auditors)	15 – 40 students
Class Composition	Access only (AMIDEAST); Integrated (ALCs)	Access only (plus auditors)	Access only
Age of Students	14-18 years old	14-18 years old	14-18 yrs old (MOE) 22-28 yrs old (M of MP)
Gender Composition	Integrated	Integrated	Gender segregated by class or within class

B. Morocco

1. Program Description

The English Access Microscholarship Program began in Casablanca in May 2003 as a small project reaching 17 students, and has grown to its current level of effort through direct involvement of the U.S. Embassy in Morocco. When the Program began in 2003, Dar America in Casablanca hosted the Access classes, and the American Language Centers (ALCs) provided administrative support. The Director at the ALC in Casablanca worked with the PAO to coordinate the first year of the Program. The ALC Director was then hired as the Director of AMIDEAST in 2005, and at that point, AMIDEAST became involved with the Access Program.



The Access Program was administered locally by two grantees: AMIDEAST and the ALCs. All ten ALCs in Morocco were administered by the Board of Directors of the American Cultural Association (ACA). Since the ALCs were started by the Embassy in the 1970s, the ACA has been tied to the Embassy; thus, the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) in Morocco has always held a seat on this Board of Directors, along with four other Americans and four Moroccans with ties to the U.S. business community in Morocco.

Both AMIDEAST and the ALCs taught Access Program classes in Rabat and Casablanca; the ALCs also taught Access classes in smaller cities in Morocco, including Fes, Meknes, Marrakech, Mohamedia, Tangier, Agadir, Oujda, Tétouan, and Kenitra. The evaluation team visited Access sites in **Rabat, Casablanca, Fes, and Meknes**.

a. Teacher Selection

Teacher applicants to the ALC were evaluated on two different scales. Native speakers of English were required to have a university degree, certificate of completion from a professional teacher training course (e.g., CELTA), and were required to complete a one-term team-teaching internship with two Master teachers. Native Moroccan teachers were required to have experience as teachers of English, hold Master's degrees, and have near native English competency. The teachers at the ALCs were more often native Moroccans who had fluency in English but were not as familiar with U.S. customs and teaching approaches.

AMIDEAST only employed U.S. citizens or other native English speakers as teachers for its Access classes. At the time of this evaluation, 60 percent of the AMIDEAST Access teachers were U.S. citizens. In addition, teachers were required to have one or more of the following qualifications: a University degree in English, certificate of completion from a professional teacher training course (e.g., CELTA), or prior experience teaching English.

b. Student Selection

Both AMIDEAST and the ALCs were fully involved in the student selection process. While neither had a formal selection committee *per se*, the in-country educational service providers were responsible for contacting school administrators and teachers to solicit names of qualified students, and interviewing applicants. Qualified students were from low-income families, established either through a government-issued certificate of low income or residency cards from poor neighborhoods. Students were also required to have demonstrated commitment to their studies through their achievement in school.

Once these students were identified and the family and the school had submitted the proper paperwork, the center conducted a brief face-to-face interview with the students before selecting those most qualified to attend the Access Program classes. Preference was given to orphans and children with disabilities. For the 2005-2006 school year, Morocco had 573 students participating in the Access Program, and it was anticipated they would have about the same number for the 2006-2007 school year.

2. Structure of Program

a. Class Structure

Class sizes ranged from around 12 to 18 students per class, and at every site visited, students were placed in classes based on test scores. Each Center had its own test, often chosen as a complement to the textbook used in the classroom (e.g., *Interchange Placement Test*, *Oxford Quick Placement Test*, etc.). Students' ages ranged from 15 to 18 years of age. One administrator noted that the Program was "meant for high school students, in my understanding." All the classes the evaluation team observed were mixed-gender, some with more boys than girls, and some with more girls than boys.

For the 2005-2006 school year, the Access Program in Morocco consisted of 240 hours of instruction over a two-year period. At centers visited by the evaluation team where classes are Access-only, the centers had designated Sunday as "Access Day," and students attended class for three hours in one of two time blocks: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Access-only centers visited for the purposes of this evaluation had four to six Access classes in total, two or three in each time slot. At mainstreamed centers (i.e., classes with non-Access and Access students), classes were held either after school or during the weekend, and students were free to enroll in any class available for their skill level. The number of classes that had Access students enrolled varied at the mainstreamed centers visited, but reportedly ranged from 10 classes to 21, with students placed at up to eight different ability levels.

b. Access-Only or Mainstreaming

Roughly half of the students interviewed in Morocco attended classes that were comprised solely of Access students, and the other half were mainstreamed into classes with non-Access students. The mainstreaming of students into regular classes was much debated in Morocco, with varying viewpoints as to the merits of both approaches.

At the AMIDEAST center in Rabat, the Access classes recently shifted from mainstreamed to exclusively Access. The center director said the switch was a deliberate decision, based on the following factors: 1) students who could afford to pay were slower to progress and exhibited

more behavioral problems; 2) the two groups were from such different social classes, they rarely interacted with one another; 3) the administrative staff could enter an Access-only class and address students directly without worrying about singling them out as scholarship students; 4) the center could teach many more students for the same amount of money; and 5) the center could designate Sunday as “Access Day,” so the students only have to come once a week. This reduced the time and financial burdens for transportation, especially for girls who may have had problems returning home late in the evenings.

In contrast to the Access-only approach, students in a focus group at the ALC in Fes had a spontaneous debate about the merits of taking classes with non-Access students. Of the eight focus group participants, two students expressed a desire to have an Access-only class, based on their frustration at the non-Access students’ lack of motivation. Five of the eight students participating in the focus group, however, strongly asserted that they appreciated the opportunity to study and interact on a social level with students who come from different backgrounds, despite the fact that these students acknowledged they work harder than the other students who may have had more exposure to or opportunity to use English.

c. Teaching Methods

Overall, the PAS staff and administrators interviewed felt the Access teachers were effective or very effective. The teachers observed in the classroom observation sessions used an integrated skills approach to teaching the students, and were native speakers of English or had functionally native proficiency. Administrators reported that teachers’ performance was evaluated on a regular basis (often each session or term, but in some cases, done quarterly), either by the center’s administrative staff, by student evaluations, or sometimes, using both methods.

I really like our teacher’s system, he always starts by talking about the things we have done during the weekend or the holidays. He always creates a discussion and finds a way to make things interesting and entertaining.

- Focus Group Participant, Morocco

The Aguirre evaluation team observed Access classes in Casablanca and Meknes (AMIDEAST and ALC). The teaching approach by the Access teachers in Morocco can be characterized as interactive and student-centered. Teachers used audio-visual materials to integrate a number of skill areas into the teaching content (listening, speaking, vocabulary, and reading). For example, English language narration and English language music on cassettes and CDs were used effectively to develop students’ capacity to listen to native speakers and to write down what they are saying or singing.

In addition, some Access teachers in Morocco employed Total Physical Response (TPR) techniques in the classroom. In one case, students were organized into two teams (boys and girls) and they had to run to the whiteboard to write down a word – the fastest team with the correct answer was awarded a point.

d. Teaching Content

Access teachers in Morocco were asked to approximate the percentage of class time devoted to various activities (see Table 2.2). On average, teachers said they spent the majority of their time covering speaking and listening skills (34.5% of class time), followed by vocabulary (18.3%), and U.S. cultures and values (14.5%).

TABLE 2.2 Access Classroom Time Allocation by Skill or Topic* Morocco	
	(%)
Speaking and listening skills	34.5
Vocabulary	18.3
U.S. cultures and values	14.5
Grammar	13.8
Reading skills	11.3
Writing	7.5

Total Sample: 4 Access teachers

** Figures are averages of the responses of the four teachers.*

Three of the four Access Program administrators interviewed in Morocco reported that their Access course content included U.S. music, arts and literature, and holidays. Two of the four also included U.S. family life and famous Americans. Only one administrator felt that his Program offered instruction on U.S. civics and democratic values. Another administrator said his center did not stress civics and democratic values as they tried to remain “apolitical” in their teaching.

Of the above topics, three of the four Access teachers interviewed in Morocco identified all except democratic values as part of their classroom curriculum. The fourth teacher maintained that Moroccan students “do not really care about U.S. culture – they are very closed and do not see any benefit to knowing about it.” When these same teachers were asked how much time they devote to U.S. culture and values during the course of the class period, the first three teachers reported spending between five and 33 percent of their time on the topic; the fourth teacher said U.S.-focused curriculum is not in his textbook, so it “never comes up.”

TABLE 2.3 Access Students' Favorite Lessons/Topics in the Program Class Morocco	
	(%)
Life in the U.S.	65.7
U.S. Culture	64.7
Jobs and Careers	56.9
People around the World	51.0
Higher Education	44.1
U.S History or Government	32.4

Total Sample: 102 Access participants

In contrast to the above suggestion that Moroccan students are not interested in U.S. culture, students surveyed selected “Life in the United States” and “U.S. Culture” as their two favorite

topics in the Access classroom (at 65.7% and 64.7%, respectively). Students were less interested in “U.S. History or Government” as a topic, with only 32 percent of students selecting it as a favorite lesson, but this rate was higher than other NEA students’ interest. Table 2.3 shows the breakdown of students’ favorite topics in Morocco.

All of the administrators and teachers reported that students are formally tested on their knowledge at the end of the course. Students were evaluated based on their speaking and listening, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. However, only one teacher said he tested students on their retention of U.S. culture and values curriculum. All of the programs evaluated reported that student evaluation and final grades take into consideration the students’ level of effort and attendance, and in some of the centers visited by the evaluation staff, a written attendance policy was posted conspicuously in each classroom. Students who miss more than the maximum number of allowed absences might be required to repeat the level before progressing further.

e. Student Retention

Retention rates among Moroccan Access students as a whole are very good; three of the four administrators interviewed said they had retained all but one or two students to date. The fourth administrator said he had retained all but eight students for the 2005-2006 school year, and said it was their common practice to recruit 25 percent more students than they had spaces for, so that any open slots could be filled quickly. The administrators with high retention rates did not have much insight into which factors cause student attrition in the Access Program. However, the fourth administrator said his Program had experienced some cultural and religious issues with parents of female students, who were reluctant to allow their daughters and sisters to be out of the house in the evenings on a regular basis. He resolved this issue by asking his Moroccan-born Access administrator talk to the families one-on-one, to assure them of the girls’ safety and of the integrity of the Program. The administrator said this strategy had been highly effective in retaining the girls, and that his center had a slightly higher enrollment rate for girls than boys.

3. Resources

Originally, the U.S. Embassy was given funds based on the ALCs’ cost estimates for tuition, enhancement activities, administrative support, and transportation expenses for the first year. The Program was administered through the RELO, who played a vital coordination role for the Program in Morocco. In its first two years, the Access Program in Morocco had several different course formats, including a nine to 10 month course, a summer course, and a two-year course. By FY 2005, most of the classes had adopted a two-year format. Starting with FY 2006, all classes under the Access Program in Morocco became a two-year program with 120 hours per year of instruction in four terms (30 hours per term). This shift to a two-year Program kept Morocco on par with other Access programs around the world, and the RELO expected two years would allow the students to progress from beginners to intermediate level speakers, as opposed to one year.

The Program had been able to double its length of instruction in part because of good cost sharing by the grantees. According to the RELO, this cost sharing occurred because the in-country educational service providers had minimized the administrative costs associated with operating the Program. The strategy of using the grantee organization to do the bulk of the administrative work was supported by the strong presence of the RELO, who coordinated the centers’ selection process and oversaw the Program’s day-to-day operations.

The Access classrooms in Morocco were all conducive to the learning process, with individual student desks, a blackboard or whiteboard, and audio-visual equipment to listen to English language tapes or watch videos. Some centers had computer stations set up for students to use for research or e-mail contact with English speaking peers. Since other classes used the classrooms, teachers did not display students' work, but many centers had U.S. cultural displays, such as English-language posters, maps, and artifacts. One of the AMIDEAST centers had named each classroom after a U.S. city (e.g., New York, San Francisco, Chicago, etc.) and had cultural displays associated with that city, such as city or neighborhood maps, subway system maps, or posters.

Materials generally were selected at the grantees' discretion, rather than being mandated by the U.S. Embassy. AMIDEAST used the *Shine* textbook series from Macmillan and the ALCs used the *Interchange* texts from Cambridge. The ALC Directors felt that the *Interchange* texts offer ample U.S. cultural content, and were appropriate for the skill level of the students. In terms of supplementary materials and audio-visual equipment, the ALCs had televisions with CD/DVD players in each classroom and had a wide variety of reference books, English language magazines, and newspapers available for use by Access students.

4. Activities

From the beginning of the Access Program in Morocco, attention from high-ranking U.S. diplomats has been instrumental in promoting the Program's visibility. In the spring of 2004, Former Secretary of State Colin Powell met with students from Marrakesh, and, in December of 2004, he met with seven of the original 17 students from Sidi Moumen, an underserved suburb of Casablanca. Students have also had opportunities to meet with Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Karen Hughes; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, Near Eastern Affairs Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Coordinator for Broader Middle East Initiatives, Elizabeth Cheney; and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs, Tom Farrell.

The students also have had many opportunities to meet with representatives of the U.S. Embassy in Morocco. The U.S. Ambassador personally presents certificates of completion at the end of each Program year. In Oujda, a small town near the Algerian border, the Ambassador visited to award certificates and the students wrote and performed a play for him; in addition, the Public Affairs Officer, the Regional English Language Officer and the Cultural Affairs Specialist all visited cultural events. During the summer break, students were invited to the Embassy for a picnic and cultural event with Embassy staff.

While AMIDEAST is relatively new to Morocco, the ALCs had a long history in the country and ample experience in integrating cultural events into their normal English instruction activities, as well as utilizing the many opportunities to draw upon Americans living or working in Morocco. The ALCs had movie clubs, which show U.S. films and invite Americans living in Morocco as guest lecturers into the centers (e.g., Fulbright scholars). In Fes, the ALCs actively promote interaction between Moroccan students and U.S. college students enrolled at the ALC for Arabic Studies courses.

a. Alumni

As Morocco was the first country to have the Access Program (beginning in 2003), it was in the unique position of having alumni at the time of the evaluation. They had not only completed their

Access studies, but have also taken their newfound English skills into the real world and marketed them for the purposes of finding jobs and applying for university studies. Although Morocco did not have an official alumni association at the time of this report, there was a very real need to keep the Access students engaged and active after they have completed the two-year English language training Program.

The evaluation team had an opportunity to see this need firsthand during an informal meeting with four of the original 17 Access students from Sidi Moumen. These young men completed their two years of English language training in the spring of 2005 and were very candid about their experiences with Access since becoming Program alumni. They expressed a strong interest in serving as tutors and mentors to current Access students, and wanted to be able to take part in some of the smaller extracurricular activities, such as the U.S. movie night events hosted by the grantees.

The young men who were interviewed for this evaluation had founded a small program to teach English in their neighborhood as a way to pass their language skills on to others in their community, and they were very interested in the prospect of forming an alumni association, and networking with alumni from nearby towns such as Rabat.

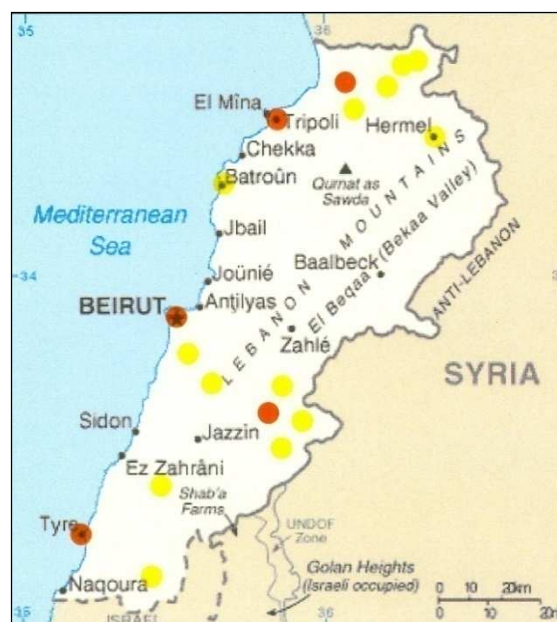
b. External Partners

In Rabat, the AMIDEAST Program had collaborated with the Rabat American School and local high schools through the One World Now program to do community service projects with the Access students, such as painting a mural with local artists and repairing the athletic field at the Rabat American School.

C. Lebanon

1. Program Description

The Access Program began in Lebanon in October 2004. In contrast to many of the other programs studied in this evaluation, Lebanon's Access Program was administered exclusively by one in-country educational service provider, AMIDEAST. Lebanon's small geographic size made it easier to coordinate activities, and having a single grantee simplified the physical coordination of the Program. In selecting AMIDEAST, PAS staff in Beirut took into account the organization's country-wide coverage, good record of accomplishment, and history of operating in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy.



Access classes were taught in local public high schools by local English teachers on an after-school basis, and were offered exclusively to public school students. The U.S. Embassy organized the Program into clusters: each cluster served four or five villages in proximity to the public school serving as the site for the Access class. The cluster selection was structured to encompass as many predominantly Muslim communities as possible. In selecting each cluster, the Embassy chose underserved areas with high unemployment, further ensuring the students' non-elite status.

The Access Program was offered in clusters in 15 different sites in Lebanon, including Beirut, Tripoli, Koura, Chouf, Tyre, Bint Jbeil, Nabatieh, and others. The Access evaluation team visited sites in **Beirut, Tripoli, Halba, Jib Jannine, and Tyre.**

a. Teacher Selection

Local school administrators selected the Access teachers, who were usually native Lebanese, and often served as the English teacher for a number of different schools in the region or town.

b. Student Selection

Teachers and school administrators were active in the student selection process as they identified local students who might qualify for the Program, and submitted the names to AMIDEAST. AMIDEAST oversaw the selection of the Access students. The application process included a written application, record of past performance in school, and performance on a Secondary Language English Proficiency (SLEP) test. Students who performed well in non-English classes but had a 60 percent or lower score on the SLEP test were given preference. As all of the Access classes in Lebanon were designated as Access-only, and there was only one class per cluster, students were not tested to determine their language ability for class placement.

In Lebanon's Access Program, socio-economic status was determined by limiting enrollment to public school students only. These schools receive little public funding, and some 60 percent of Lebanese families send their children to private schools. Thus, the fact that the Access students attended a public school denoted their family's non-elite position. According to both the PAS staff

and in-country educational service provider administrators, parents who could not afford private school send their children to public schools. In addition, the clusters were selected based on the neighborhoods or communities being classified as low-income areas by the Government of Lebanon, further ensuring the students' low socio-economic status. Students who had one or both parents deceased were given additional preference.

2. Structure of Program

a. Class Structure

During the 2004-2005 school year, Lebanon had 200 students enrolled in nine clusters, but for the 2005-2006 school year (the second year of Access in Lebanon) the Program had expanded to serve 434 new students in 21 clusters. Each cluster served approximately 20 students, depending upon the level of demand in that region, and whether the class had auditors or not. In classes that had auditors, the actual number of students in the classroom could go as high as 26 to 28 students. Access classes in Lebanon were mixed gender classes, with boys and girls interacting freely.

The Access Program in Lebanon consisted of 400 total hours of instruction over a two-year period. Classes met twice a week after school for two and a half to three hours per class. Many of the students who participated in the evaluation said either they attended Access classes in the same location where they went to school, or they reported a relatively short commute between their regular school and the school where the Access classes were held.

b. Teaching Methods

Access classes were observed by the evaluation team in Halba and Jib Jannine. The classrooms were very large, and with an average of 20 Access students class, the classrooms visited were about half full. At both sites, the teachers had a very warm and close relationship with the students. Cassettes and student-centered exercises were used to integrate listening and speaking skills. In Jib Jannine, the teacher split the class into pairs, and the pairs were asked to conduct a conversation in front of the class (in English). The teacher engaged the other students by asking them questions regarding the conversation they just had heard. The team also observed group activities assigned to ensure the students worked together.

Local English teachers from the Lebanese public schools teach Access classes. Overall, the teachers were all very experienced. The youngest teacher interviewed had five years' experience, and the three others had ten or more years of experience. The Access Program offered the teachers an opportunity to enhance their teaching skills and to receive training on U.S.-style teaching methods, which they may transferred into their regular classroom instruction methods. The PAS staff organized several teacher training sessions through the grantee organization (using non-Access monies), which proved to be a very popular and valuable experience for Access teachers. A representative of the grantee organization, which bore primary responsibility for the Program's administration, evaluated Access teachers on a quarterly basis.

c. Teaching Content

When asked about content of the Access classes, four of the five administrators interviewed said their Access Program curriculum included units on holidays and family life in the United States.

Three of the five respondents said they also taught music, arts and literature, and two of the administrators reported their Access classes included content on democratic values.

Access teachers in Lebanon reported covering all of the above topics, and added U.S. civics and famous Americans to the list of topics covered. However, only one of the four teachers reported covering U.S. Government in the planned curriculum. Another teacher said that, although she did not teach a unit on U.S. Government, her students had led a spontaneous debate on the subject during one class period. One teacher said she employed democratic values in class, by allowing the students to vote on classroom activities.

Teachers also were asked to indicate the percentage of class time devoted to various activities. The four teachers interviewed indicated that, on average, about 31 percent of class time is devoted to speaking and listening skills; 17.5 percent is dedicated to reading and writing skills; and 11.3 percent to grammar, vocabulary, and U.S. culture and values (see Table 2.4).

TABLE 2.4 Access Classroom Time Allocation by Skill or Topic* Lebanon	
	(%)
Speaking and listening	31.3
Reading	17.5
Writing	17.5
Grammar	11.3
Vocabulary	11.3
U.S. cultures and values	11.3

Total Sample: 4 Access teachers

** Figures presented are averages of the four teachers.*

When asked to select favorite topics, 83 percent of Lebanese students surveyed chose “Jobs and Careers” as their favorite, followed by “Life in the United States” (69.0%) and “Higher Education” (60.0%). “U.S. History or Government” was the least favorite at 12 percent. Table 2.5 shows the full range of their responses.

TABLE 2.5 Access Students' Favorite Lessons/Topics in the Program Class Lebanon	
	(%)
Jobs and Careers	83.1
Life in the U.S.	68.7
Higher Education	60.2
U.S. Culture	50.6
People around the World	45.8
U.S History or Government	12.0

Total Sample: 83 Access participants

According to school administrators and teachers, the Access students in Lebanon were assessed at the end of the Program year by the grantee organization, using the same SLEP test used at the beginning of the Program. Teachers supplemented this formal test with their own evaluation or by asking the students to complete a final project. All of the teachers surveyed for this evaluation said they take into account such factors as attendance and participation in determining students' final grades. As one teacher put it, "It is clear that in order for the students to participate in Access and develop their language skills, they need to be well behaved, motivated and interested in the Program, and attend all classes."

d. Student Retention

At the sites visited for this evaluation, Access classes had experienced some attrition. Teachers reported that this was due primarily to transportation issues, competition with regular school commitments or family time commitments. Administrators and teachers suggested increasing transportation money for students who live far away, and increasing extracurricular activities to motivate students, as methods to reduce the attrition rate.

However, due to the popularity of the Access Program in Lebanon, the grantee organization recruited more students than they could teach, and wait-listed students quickly filled any vacant slots. Most of the time, auditors who had been attending classes fill vacancies, so no instruction time was lost as teachers tried to help new students integrate into the class.

3. Resources

All of the classrooms observed in Lebanon were extremely spacious, and the abundance of space allows the Access classes to accommodate auditors. Desks were very sturdy wood constructions, and all the classrooms had blackboards. Audio recording devices were available for listening to English language tapes. As Access students only used these classrooms on an extracurricular basis, no student work was displayed on the walls, and there were few U.S. cultural displays in classrooms or hallways. Since classes were held in public schools, which are often poorly funded, the evaluation team did not observe any school libraries or computer facilities.

AMIDEAST Access Coordinators put together the Access Program curriculum and provided materials to the Access clusters. The textbooks used are the *True Colors* English books. AMIDEAST also provided literature about the United States and other supplemental materials, such as English language magazines, newspapers and CDs. The U.S. Embassy sent educational materials and information to the Access clusters. Other enhancement activities included professional and career development activities and visits to local community libraries.

In contrast to Morocco, the Access Program in Lebanon had little to no RELO involvement. The RELO for Lebanon is based in Jordan and has limited opportunities to visit; a vast majority of the activities and administration was coordinated through PAS Beirut. PAS staff also took advantage of assistance from their English Language Fellows by coordinating one-day training seminar for Access teachers, who reportedly had displayed increased interest and willingness toward training programs in English language instruction.

4. Activities

U.S. Embassy staff, mainly the APAO, had visited nineteen of 21 active Access clusters. Because of security concerns, two clusters were not visited. The security situation in Lebanon limited the

amount of direct interaction the Access students had with American people, especially compared with a country like Morocco, where travel was unrestricted and there were many teachers and visitors from the United States with whom the students could interact. Thus, PAS staff tried to maximize Post resources by interacting with the students as much as possible. Embassy staff visited schools to talk with students about U.S. culture and their own backgrounds; the Embassy provided U.S. Government materials on culture; and Access students were invited to events at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut or the Embassy housing compound, participating in barbeques, concerts, and even a Thanksgiving lunch at the Bristol Hotel.

For some of these events, the PAS staff brought 15 to 20 Embassy staff, including the U.S. Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission, to engage in dialogue with the students. These events offered great opportunities for Embassy staff to interact with non-elite, hard-to-reach audiences in Lebanon.

a. Alumni

At the time of this evaluation, the first class of Lebanese Access students had not yet completed the Program, so there was no alumni association yet in place. However, the PAS staff reported that they had made plans to link Access alumni with the U.S. Department of State alumni web community, which had a youth section available for young people who have completed DoS-sponsored programs.

b. External Partners

The structure of the Access Program in Lebanon inherently produced more local partnerships than in other countries included in the evaluation. The most important of those partners were the municipal governments across Lebanon. The Access Program enabled the U.S. Embassy to engage municipal governments in the Program, as they were involved in the administration of the schools hosting the classes. This was a feature unique among those programs included in the evaluation.

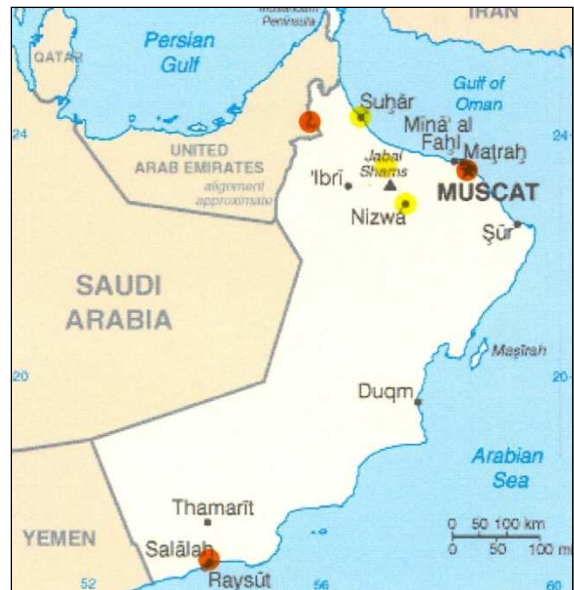
Schools involved in the Access Program have collaborated formally with other local high schools to exchange experiences and teaching methods. They identified volunteer opportunities through enhancement activities in the community. For example, Access students have volunteered with local organizations on their own time, such as local public libraries where Access students assisted in transferring the hand-written catalog into the computer system and read stories to local children. Access students have also volunteered with local community organizations such as orphanages and elderly homes, where they visited residents, and with village municipalities, where they have helped to distribute civic materials to citizens.

D. Oman

1. Program Description

The Access Program in Oman was launched in June 2004. In contrast to other programs included in this evaluation, where Ministry involvement was marginal, the Access Program in Oman was overseen by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Manpower (MoMP). The Omani Ministries were actively involved in the selection of students and in various aspects in the oversight of the Program as implemented by the in-country educational service providers.

In Oman, there were multiple in-country educational service providers: Al-Buraimi College, College of Education, ELS Language Centers, English Language Centre, Modern College of Business and Science, and Sohar University. The three in-country educational service providers visited for this evaluation were Al-Buraimi College in **Buraimi**, English Language Services (ELS) in **Muscat**, **Salalah**, and **Al-Hail**, and the English Language Centre (ELC) in Salalah.



a. Teacher Selection

All of the Access teachers interviewed were already regular staff members at the in-country educational service providers where they taught their Access classes, rather than being hired especially for the Program. Most teachers had at least a university degree, often in English or Linguistics, and a certificate in teaching English as a Second Language. Many of the teachers also were experienced English teachers and native speakers of English from England, Australia, South Africa, and the United States.

b. Student Selection

The number of students was divided equally among the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Manpower in Oman. Both were involved in the student selection process. In the case of the Ministry of Education, PAS Muscat sent an Access Program “offering letter” to the Ministry, notifying it of the U.S. Embassy’s intent to fund English language microscholarships. MoE representatives then contacted representatives in six regions of the country (Interior, North, South, Al-Buraimi, Al-Batinah, and Muscat) to request nominations of high school students from these regions. The regions prepared nomination lists according to two criteria: gender and “limited income.” The local representative of the Ministry of Social Development provided information regarding “limited income” status. U.S. Department of State correspondence indicated that officially, the standard definition of disadvantaged in Oman was a family net income of approximately 250 Oman Rials (USD \$650) or less per month. The MoE and PAS staff then reviewed the nomination lists and scheduled group interviews with the students to determine their commitment to the Program and enthusiasm for learning English.

The Ministry of Manpower also received a Program “offering letter” from PAS Muscat. Representatives from the MoMP then generated a nomination list from their database of unemployed Omanis. They also scheduled group interviews for a selection committee that consisted of representatives from the MoMP and PAS staff. Once selected, the in-country educational service providers received the names of students chosen for the Access Program. Each of the in-country educational service providers worked exclusively with Access students from either the MoE or the MoMP.

The Access Program in Oman awarded 280 scholarships each school year, and, for those 280 slots, the Ministries received an average of 800 nominations for the Program. Students nominated through the Ministry of Education fit the wider pattern of being high school-aged students (generally 15 to 17 years of age). Students nominated through the Ministry of Manpower Program, however, were recruited because they were unemployed, so their ages ranged from 18 to 22, with some students even older.

2. Structure of Program

a. Class Structure

Access classes ranged in size from 15 to 20 students on average, but one classroom had 45 students. The administrator at this school recognized the class size was a problem, and indicated the Program would be split into two classes the following year, in order to serve the same number of students in smaller classes. Some of the in-country educational service providers reported using a placement test to determine the students’ starting English levels, but overall, administrators felt the majority of Access students were starting at the same beginner level. In general, students were kept in Access-only classes, but in some cases, students had been moved into non-Access classes either because they were at a more advanced level than their Access classmates, or because they had fallen behind their group and needed to repeat a level for which an Access-only class was not available.

Access students selected through the MoE met four times per week for a total of 10 hours a week, for one year. Access students selected through the MoMP met five days a week for four hours per day, for four months. Both groups had a total instruction length of 320 hours. Classes for the MoE students generally met after school, as the students were in regular high school classes during the day. MoMP students, however, met in the morning, and classes lasted until lunchtime, as the students in that Program were unemployed adults.

The classes in Salalah were single-sex, while the classes in Buraimi and Muscat were mixed. In one case, boys were seated in the front of the classroom and girls were seated at the back with several feet separating the two groups. In another, the students sat along the perimeter of the room in a horseshoe arrangement with boys along one side and girls on the other side. The physical separation of boys and girls was necessary in Oman due to cultural norms.

b. Teaching Methods

Center administrators reported satisfaction with the quality of the teaching staff. Three of the four administrators interviewed said their teachers were effective, and the fourth administrator rated two of the teachers as effective and two as very effective. Teachers’ performance was evaluated on a regular basis by administrative staff, and through student surveys at the end of

each term. Teachers observed by the evaluation team used an integrated skills approach in the classroom and balanced instruction with practice of skills development.

Students worked collaboratively with one another to complete the exercises in class – always with the person seated next to them. The students were very vocal in calling out their answers and the teachers had a very positive rapport with the students. Most of the interaction observed was based on exercises and the teachers moved between the students to provide individualized assistance. The Access class in Muscat was the exception—in the class observed the teacher had students interact with one another during a class exercise in the middle of the room. The teacher went from student to student in an effort to facilitate the exercise and bridge the gap between genders.

c. Teaching Content

The beginning level of the Access students was very basic. The in-country educational service providers in Oman actually had to create an 099 level class for the Access students, a level more basic than the beginning 100-level class offered by the language centers, because many of the Access students needed to learn the basics of the English language, such as the alphabet, before achieving the level at which most of their students begin language lessons. Most of the teaching orientation was geared towards assisting the students to fill out answers in their workbooks or handouts.

Four of the five administrators surveyed said the Access classes at their Center included some U.S. cultural content as part of the curriculum. The most commonly discussed topic was U.S. family life, especially in comparison to family life in Oman. Two of the five administrators reported instruction on music, arts and literature of the United States, U.S. holidays and special events, and famous U.S. citizens, but two of the administrators said the textbook series they use in the classroom did not have a strong U.S. cultural component in its curriculum.

When asked to approximate the percentage of class time spent on various activities, teachers indicated they spent 20 to 25 percent of their time on speaking skills and reading skills, 17.5 percent of their time on writing and grammar, 15 percent on vocabulary, and 3.75 percent of class time on U.S. culture and values (see Table 2.6).

TABLE 2.6 Access Classroom Time Allocation by Skill or Topic* Oman	
	(%)
Speaking and listening	25.0
Reading	20.0
Writing	17.5
Grammar	17.5
Vocabulary	15.0
U.S. cultures and values	3.75
Other	1.25

Total Sample: 4 Access teachers

** Figures are an average of the responses of the four teachers.*

Access students in Oman, when asked to rate their favorite topics, selected “Jobs and Careers” as their favorite theme (44.2%), followed by “People around the World” (39.5%), and “U.S. Culture” (31.4%). As in other countries evaluated in the NEA region, “U.S. History or Government” was the least preferred topic (12.8%). See Table 2.7 for the full responses.

TABLE 2.7 Access Students’ Favorite Lessons/Topics in the Program Class Oman	
	(%)
Jobs and Careers	44.2
People around the World	39.5
U.S. Culture	31.4
Higher Education	26.7
Life in the U.S.	15.1
U.S. History or Government	12.8

Total Sample: 86 Access participants

School administrators and teachers all reported that they formally test students on their English language proficiency. Some classes were tested at the end of each term, some were tested at the end of each unit, and some students were tested weekly. All of the five teachers interviewed said they tested students on speaking and listening skills, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary, but none of the instructors tested students on U.S. culture and values curriculum. Both teachers and administrators indicated that students’ final grades also took into consideration factors such as attitude, effort, and attendance when evaluating students’ classroom performance.

d. Student Retention

According to the three school administrators who answered the survey item regarding student retention, most Centers had retained a majority of their students each session, but felt that students’ most common reason for leaving the Program was competition with regular, non-Access schoolwork. The long and difficult commute (sometimes up to 50 miles each way) exacerbated the time management problem for some students.

Teachers’ responses seemed to corroborate the administrators’ reports of high retention rates; although one teacher said his class had lost six students. When teachers and administrators were asked if the vacant slots had been filled with replacement students, one respondent said they had been replaced, but another respondent said the Ministry does not allow them to find replacement students.

3. Resources

The Access classrooms in Oman were very comfortable with air conditioning, appropriate lighting and individual student desks that could be moved or grouped easily. In the case where boys and girls were in the same class, this enabled the creation of a physical space between the two groups. Each classroom was equipped with a whiteboard and all teachers had access to cassette players. The Access classes were held in the same rooms as the other classes at the in-country educational service providers; consequently, no student work specific to the Access class/students was displayed in the rooms. In some instances, student work from the center was displayed in the

rooms and, in several instances, there were visual materials displayed in the classroom to assist in English language instruction (i.e., diagram of anatomy and the English vocabulary, etc.).

The Omani sites used several different kinds of materials. The Director of the ELS in Salalah stated that the students were using the *Interchange* series; however, the *English Please* textbooks were being used during the classroom observations. *Language Links* (published by Cambridge) was being used in Al-Buraimi College,⁵ while *Headway* and *Enterprise* were being used at ELC Salalah. Until the time of the evaluation site visits, the RELO provided assistance from Bahrain. She accompanied the evaluation team on site visits to the ELC in Salalah.

Transportation presented considerable difficulties in Oman. The in-country educational service providers did not provide a transportation allowance—though some in-country educational service providers, such as ELS Al-Hail, arrange for buses to transport the students. Many of the students traveled a great distance to attend classes several times a week, and many students surveyed in this evaluation cited transportation as a serious problem. Interviews with PAS staff also revealed considerable challenges related to transportation and the costs associated with such a widely dispersed population.

4. Activities

Students' opportunities to meet U.S. citizens or representatives from the U.S. Embassy were limited, unless they had a teacher from the United States who could share cultural experiences and information with them firsthand. One administrator said that the PAS Muscat staff had visited several classrooms. The U.S. Ambassador to Oman handed out certificates at the completion of the Access Program, another opportunity for students to interact with Americans. Several students, when given an opportunity to share anything not specifically asked in the one-on-one interviews, requested more cultural activities and opportunities to meet "real" Americans.

I suggest that they add some cultural activities about the USA, like visits to the U.S. Embassy in Muscat.

- Access Student, Oman

a. Alumni

At the time of this evaluation, the Access Program in Oman did not have an alumni association. The Ministries of Education and Manpower were reluctant to allow in-country educational service providers direct contact with the Access students; therefore, the center administrators felt the Ministries would not approve of the level of direct interaction with the students that an alumni association would entail.

b. External Partners

Synergies between the Access Program and local networks were built into the structure of the Program. The U.S. Embassy worked with the MoE and MoMP to oversee the management of the Program. According to the MoMP, the Access Program helped to prepare the youth for the workplace, creating a connection between the Access Program and other vocational training

⁵ The Access teacher at the Al-Buraimi College used supplemental materials and books for his lesson plans which he bought using his own personal funds: 'Keep Writing 1 & 2'; Reader: 'Facts and Figures', for example.

programs or university study. Ministries maintained contact with students who complete the Program.

SCA Region Program Summary

The table below summarizes the Access Program in the South and Central Asian Affairs Region. The details of each Program are discussed in the sections that follow.

TABLE 2.8 SCA Region Program Summary			
	India	Bangladesh	Pakistan
Program Start Dates	2004	2004	2004
Study Sites	New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Chennai	Dhaka	Lahore
Implementers	Jamia Millia Islamia, SPRAT, Anjuman-e- Himayath-e-Islam	Language Proficiency Center	CARE Foundation
Ministries	Not Involved	Not Involved	Not Involved
Course Duration and Total Class Hours	1-2 years 208-396 hours	2 years 384 hours	2 years 640 hours
Class Frequency and Timing	2-3x/week after school or between shifts, 3-7.5 hours/week	3x/week after school, 6 hours/week	5x/week after school, 10 hours/week
Class Size	25-35 students	7-15 students	20-25 students
Class Composition	Access only (plus auditors)	Access only	Access only
Age of Students	14-18 years old	14-18 years old	16-18 yrs old
Gender Composition	Gender segregated by class or within class	Gender segregated within class (1st cohort) or by class (2nd cohort)	Gender segregated by class or within class

E. Bangladesh

1. Program Description

The Access Program was launched in Bangladesh in October 2004. The Cultural Affairs Specialist (CAS) at the American Center was largely responsible for starting the Access Program. The current Director of the American Center arrived at his assignment in Dhaka shortly after the Access Program began. It had been determined prior to his arrival that the Access Program would seek solely *madrassa*⁶ students. The Language Proficiency Center (LPC) was selected by the CAS to provide services for the Program. The Director of the LPC was already well-connected and trusted by the *madrassa* principals. Together, the CAS and the Director selected the first *madrassas* to work with the Access Program. The LPC Director became the Access Program administrator.



Given that the American Center decided to focus the Access Program on *madrassa* students, it is important to know the two types of *madrassas* in Bangladesh. The *alia* *madrassas* are the more progressive of the two types in that they follow the government syllabus of instruction, with the students receiving education in science, the social sciences and mathematics in addition to their religious instruction. The second type of *madrassa* is the *qaulmi* *madrassa* which is extremely conservative, bases instruction solely on the Koran and hadiths (collections of writings based on the teachings of Muhammad and regarded as important tools for determining the Muslim way of life), and, for the most part, does not teach secular subjects. The American Center decided to offer the Access Program to the *alia* *madrassas*, because they were more likely than the *qaulmi* *madrassas* to accept such a Program.

At the time of this evaluation, the Access Program was operating only in **Dhaka** and was teaching students from five local *alia* *madrassas*. The students traveled to the LPC for their English language classes after school hours.

a. Teacher Selection

The LPC had four female teachers and three male teachers plus the administrator. The Program administrator sought teachers for the Access Program who were trained in English language instruction, had a solid academic education, were knowledgeable in the subject area, had excellent pronunciation skills (a particular weakness in many language classes in Bangladesh), and were able to communicate well with children.

b. Student Selection

The selection process for the first group of Access Program students was conducted by the American Center staff, who interviewed prospective candidates from lists submitted by the

⁶ The word *madrassa* means *school* or "learning center" in Arabic. It is variably transliterated as *madrassah*, *madrash*, *medresa*, or *madressa*. A *madrassa* is a Muslim school, college, or university that is often part of a mosque.

principals of two madrassas. The selection committee looked primarily for participants who thought they “could make a difference,” who already had some basic language skills, and who might eventually become eligible for study at a university. Interest, commitment, and drive were also considerations in the selection.

The first Access Program participants were 40 in number: 20 boys and 20 girls. In the second round, 60 students were selected for the Access Program. American Center staff selected the students, this time with more involvement from the administrator. All five of the schools in the second round served non-elite students. Many of the students lived at the madrassas because their parents obtained jobs overseas and lived abroad in order to support their families.

2. Structure of Program

a. Class Structure

In Bangladesh, the Access Program was nearing the end of its second year—having provided approximately 384 hours of class time instruction. The Access students attended classes at the Language Proficiency Center three times per week after their madrassa classes for two-hour sessions each time, totaling six hours per week. Classes were held at the Language Proficiency Center, which was a few kilometers away from each of the schools. The teachers said that the students ranged from absolute beginners or basic to low intermediate when they began classes. The PAO, administrator and two teachers felt the time allotted was sufficient for students to improve their language a whole level—up to intermediate level—but two of the teachers disagreed and felt that the students would need more time.

The Dhaka in-country educational service provider offered these English classes exclusively to Access students—others from the community could register for fee-based English classes. The classes were quite small, with between seven and 15 students, with students ranging in age from 14 to 18 years. The first year group of students in the Program was integrated, with boys and girls in mixed classes. The second year group of students, however, was segregated by gender. The Program administrator hoped that the Center would be able to mix the classes in the future.

b. Teaching Methods

The Aguirre evaluation team, observing a class of second-year Access girls, noted that the class tended to be more teacher-centered than student-centered. The evaluation team estimated that 70 percent of the classroom interaction was teacher-to-students, with 20 percent being student-to-teacher and 10 percent student-to-student.

Although not observed, the Access teachers reported that they used an integrated skills approach to teaching English. Teachers conducted classes primarily in English, with a balance of instruction and skills development. The teachers used American English in the classroom, but seemed unfamiliar with some vocabulary words that were in the lesson. The teacher did not provide the students with an explanation of the objectives of the lesson.

The students engaged in some group work and helped one another. Overall, the classroom environment was nurturing and respectful. The teachers seem to know the students well and were able to identify their needs, but there was little opportunity for students to ask questions. When students made mistakes in speaking, the teachers gently corrected them. The teachers used

questioning techniques to address issues in listening skills. The teachers reported using the same instructional techniques for both male and female students.

The Program administrator and the RELO evaluated Access teachers in Bangladesh on periodic visits. The administrator made regular visits to the classrooms, examined the students' test papers, and talked with students frequently to observe their progress and to evaluate teachers.

c. Teaching Content

After struggling with the *World English* curriculum provided by the American Center in Dhaka for a few months in the first year of the Program, the LPC purchased its own materials and developed a curriculum focused on six areas: listening comprehension, reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, written English and conversational English. The LPC team did not use a specific textbook to provide an overarching framework with additional supplementary materials as other programs did, but the experienced teachers selected key texts, workbooks and other tools to ensure that students achieved at least an intermediate level of English fluency by the end of the course. The teachers shared lessons plans across the classes, since they rotated to teach all of the classes in the course of a week.

Half of the teachers interviewed said that they emphasized students listening to, memorizing, and reciting English dialogues before they learn to read in English. The others felt they emphasized learning to communicate their ideas in written and spoken English, with less importance placed on grammatical accuracy than communication. Table 2.9 illustrates the average percentage of classroom time dedicated to various skills and topics according to the teachers.

TABLE 2.9 Percentage of Classroom Time Allocation by Skill or Topic* Bangladesh	
	%
Speaking and listening	31.3
Reading	17.5
Public speaking and special projects	15.0
Vocabulary	13.8
Grammar	11.3
Writing	10.0
U.S. cultures and values	5.0

Total Sample: 4 Access teachers

* Figures are an average of the responses of the four teachers.

When asked to select favorite topics, 51 percent of Bangladeshi students surveyed chose "Higher Education" as their favorite, followed by "People around the World" (45.5%). "Jobs and Careers" was the least favorite, at 4.7 percent. Table 2.10 shows the full list of their responses.

TABLE 2.10 Access Students' Favorite Lessons/Topics in the Program Class Bangladesh	
	(%)
Higher Education	50.9
People around the World	45.5
Life in the U.S.	36.4
U.S. Culture	21.8
U.S History or Government	18.2
Jobs and Careers	4.7

Total Sample: 55 Access participants

The students were assessed using different means. One teacher stated that she used oral, written and listening comprehension exams. Another said he rated the students, and two said they did not have a fixed system, which was not problematic because their classes were very small and they were “able to remember each student’s progress.” All of the teachers agreed, however, that there would be an end-of-Program exam based on the materials covered in the course (including grammar, vocabulary, speaking and listening, writing and reading, and U.S. culture and values) that would include both written exercises and an oral interview. They also said that motivation, attitude and effort were taken into account in grading the students. According to the Program administrator, student progress was assessed quarterly through written and oral tests. The quarterly test grades of the Access students were provided to the principals of the madrassas that the students attend as well as to the American Center.

d. Student Retention

Attrition was not a significant problem for the Access Program in Bangladesh. Out of the first cohort, one girl married and her husband would not permit her to attend the Access classes; two other girls moved from the area, but were replaced by two girls nominated by the madrassa. Two boys left their madrassa to attend another school, but requested, and received, permission to continue their participation in the Access Program. One of the reasons for their success in keeping students in class was a requirement that the madrassa principals must contact the Language Proficiency Center to validate excusal from class. One of the teachers, however, thought they would not have lost any students if a monthly stipend were available, since the students would have a direct economic incentive to continue to attend the Access classes.

3. Resources

This Program was built on the reputations and personal relationships of key individuals at the American Center, the LPC and the madrassas. The American Center and the Language Proficiency Center had a close relationship throughout the management of the Access Program. The CAS had close knowledge of the LPC and its work before the Access Program began and had taught previously with the Program administrator. She had great trust in the Center and in the Program administrator’s commitment to Access. Most of these schools did not have external programs and they made demands in the past that required significant adjustments, such as requiring that the LPC subsidize transportation for the students mid-way through the Program. Managing these requests carefully, accommodating where possible, and educating the madrassas about working with external partners was critical to providing uninterrupted services. The administrator also had to be flexible to accommodate parent concerns, for example, allowing

parents to observe classes without an appointment until they felt comfortable about the Program content. The relationships with the participating madrassas must be carefully maintained, in order to continue the LPC's success.

The resources to implement the Access Program came from both the American Center and the LPC. During the first year of the Access Program, the LPC worked with *World English* texts and materials supplied by the American Center. However, only three sets of books were furnished, which was insufficient. The administrator felt that he could design a more appropriate curriculum and was given the 'go-ahead' to design a curriculum for second year of the Access Program. Few American English texts were available in Bangladesh, so the Access teachers used a mixed medium of British and American English.

The classrooms provided by the LPC were clean and simple, with a blackboard and chalk and a few posters on the walls. Most classrooms were well lit and cooled by an overhead fan. The students were usually arranged in a u-shaped or classroom style with a podium in the front for the teacher, and the tables could be pulled apart for small group work. Teachers hung up English posters along the walls of the classroom, including pictures and words of colors and vegetables. Some student writing was posted in the classrooms and hallways and a small library containing storybooks was provided by the LPC.

It was determined partway through the first year that transportation allowances would be needed to facilitate the Access students' attendance, and the LPC provided those at its own cost. In the second grant, this cost was included in the budget.

In the course of the past year and a half, the Regional English Language Officer visited the Access Program three times and was very involved in the Access classes. He observed Access classrooms and taught a conversational class. Two English Language Fellows currently teach in Bangladesh. At the time of the evaluation visit, the team learned that in 2007, one or two additional EL Fellows were expected to arrive who would help with the Access Program, one of whom had previous experience teaching in a madrassa.

4. Activities

The Access students have had visits from American Center staff and Peace Corps volunteers. The Cultural Affairs Officer (CAO) in Dhaka visited the Program and held a well-received session on the life in the United States to contrast the views that the children get from their madrassas, movies, and television. The U.S. Ambassador in Bangladesh has visited the LPC, as have two Imams visiting from the United States. The Director of the American Center has also visited and made presentations to the madrassas.

a. Alumni

At the time of the evaluation visit, there were no alumni as the second-year group was nearing the end of its Program. No concrete plans had been developed for maintaining alumni involvement in the Program, but the PAS staff were interested to learn what other countries had tried in this area.

F. India

1. Program Description

The Access Program in India began in November 2004. It was implemented by the Public Diplomacy Section of the U.S. Embassy and Consulates, and overseen by the American Center in New Delhi. The American Center All-India Advisor was primarily responsible for setting up the Program and selecting the sites. The Cultural Affairs Officer arrived at the U.S. Embassy during the selection of the schools in late 2004. Although the American Center in New Delhi had final approval on the selection process, each of the U.S. Consulates throughout the country had its own selection committee.



There was no precedent for this kind of English scholarship program in the country, and there was little information about English language instruction “on the ground,” particularly the availability of teachers with experience in U.S.-style classrooms. There was plenty of fee-based English language tutoring for the qualified, but the non-elite were largely underserved. Students have minimal English education through the schools, even though English is supposed to be the main medium starting in the ninth standard (grade).

The All-India Advisor at the American Center identified two main issues after assessing the education situation in India: 1) India has a Muslim plurality, but is not a Muslim country; and 2) this new program would have to be a youth program—not a “minority” program, and therefore it might incorporate underprivileged children across different groups. Another issue in India was in awarding the grant. Very few organizations in India had a Foreign Contribution Registry Number (FCRN), which legally enables them to receive funding from foreign sources. None of the government schools had FCRNs, especially not those serving underprivileged children. This limited the pool of schools and centers that might have had the capacity to take on the Program.

There were five Access Program sites in India at the time of the evaluation: New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Mumbai, and Kolkata. The Access evaluation team visited **New Delhi**, **Chennai**, and **Ahmedabad**. Because each of the programs was administered by a different American Center or U.S. Consulate, and the in-country educational service providers were different in each city.

New Delhi

The American Center in New Delhi chose Jamia Millia Islamia as a grant recipient in November of 2004. Jamia Millia Islamia is a university in New Delhi that was founded as a Muslim school and its current student base is about 40 percent Muslim; it serves youth from the Jamia neighborhood of New Delhi and boarding students from Uttar Pradesh. The university has a secondary school adjacent to the campus. The students from the secondary school are generally from underprivileged backgrounds. About a quarter of the university’s students came from the

secondary school, making it attractive for students and their parents. The Program administrator at the school was a lecturer in English at the university and the Director of the secondary school.

Chennai

The Access Program began in Chennai in November 2004. The Program Manager and Foreign Service National at the U.S. Consulate in Chennai were largely responsible for setting up the Program. She was familiar with the Muslim schools in the area, but the lack of a FCRN was a problem for most local organizations. Anjuman-e-Himayath-e-Islam was the only school in Chennai with a FCRN, so it was the only viable in-country educational service provider in Chennai. Anjuman-e-Himayath-e-Islam is a foundation with a boarding school that serves orphans or those children and youth whose parents cannot support them—mostly from poor areas outside Chennai. The Board of Directors of Anjuman was very active in the Muslim community in Chennai. The school has 800 students, 400 boys and 400 girls, all residing at the school and destitute.

Ahmedabad

The Society for the Promotion of Rational Thinking (SPRAT) in Ahmedabad received a grant for the Access Program in 2005. The Caravan Centers, which teach English language courses, focus on serving the needs of the disadvantaged Muslim populations in Ahmedabad. The first Access classes began in October 2005. The Program was administered by the Director of SPRAT.

Ahmedabad, as well as the greater state of Gujarat, had several unique circumstances that made the Access Program more difficult to administer than in other states. Clashes between Hindus and Muslims turned to violent conflict in 2002, creating a clear division between the Hindu side and the Muslim side of the city that remains today. The idea of SPRAT was to merge the two communities, make tools available, create charity within the community, and create an institutional framework for education of Ahmedabad's youth. The Access Program presented an opportunity to integrate the two cultures through English language learning.

a. Teacher Selection

In New Delhi, teacher selection was administered by the Program administrator. The university advertised the teacher positions and hired those candidates whom they thought were best qualified. The teachers selected for the Access Program came from outside the Jamia Millia Islamia school system. A selection committee convened to assess the teacher candidates. All four teachers had functionally native proficiency (two had lived in the United States for a period of some years on exchange programs). The teachers had a two-month probation period, during which time the administrator regularly observed their classes, provided feedback, and in two cases, determined that a teacher was not a good fit for the Program. They were replaced by others who were better able to meet the demands of the Program.

The Program Manager in Chennai selected the teachers for the Access Program. She brought them in from outside the Anjuman School; some were university professors or school directors. Others were found through the English Language Teaching Organization of South India. She interviewed the applicants and made the selections based on their professional experience. She chose eight teachers (one per class) and one resource teacher.

Recruiting teachers in Ahmedabad was harder than at other India Access sites. The state of Gujarat opposed teaching English in schools, and only in recent years has English become compulsory at the secondary level. In addition, the Chief Minister for Gujarat decreed that any teacher in a school receiving government funding (approximately 85% of schools in the state) could not offer tutoring or teaching services outside of the school (an anti-corruption measure).

The Access Program, therefore, was not able to draw on the English teachers in the government-funded schools, but was reliant on a pool of private English tutors who had less experience teaching or who were not qualified to have a full-time job at one of the government schools. The Access teachers also had to be willing to go to remote areas outside of the city center and into Muslim areas (a potentially daunting proposition for Hindus in the city). The Program administrator advertised through newspapers, colleges and posters. He found a sufficient number of teachers, but the constraints caused the quality of teachers to be lower than in other areas.

b. Student Selection

In New Delhi and Chennai, students were selected from the host secondary schools, Jamia Millia Islamia secondary school and Anjuman-e-Himayath-e-Islam school.

For the initial iteration of the Program at Jamia Millia Islamia, the administrator announced the opportunity to study English to those students in Grade 9 (generally aged 14-15). Those who volunteered for the Program took a short written comprehension test and those who scored most poorly were selected for the Access Program. One hundred students were admitted to the Access Program. Unfortunately, the Program had a 50 percent attrition rate in its first year. The classes started in November 2004 and when participants took their Grade 10 exams in March, many failed and did not return to the Program. To compensate for the decrease in enrollment, the school began classes for another 50 students in November 2005.

Students were selected by a selection committee from the Anjuman-e-Himayath-e-Islam school: the teachers, the principal, and the board of directors. The U.S. Consulate provided the criteria for the selection, and of the 800 students residing in the school, 120 were selected for the Access Program: 60 enrolled in the first year (30 boys and 30 girls) and 60 in the second year (34 boys and 26 girls). Because the school was a residential facility and the students were overseen by wardens,⁷ this was the only Access Program visited that had perfect attendance and a zero attrition rate.

Learning English is the first step to overcoming resistance to change.

- Program Administrator, India

In Ahmedabad, the Access administrator and the SPRAT Governing Board selected the students. Upon announcing the first English class at the first of the five Caravan Centers, nearly 60 students applied. The applicants took a proficiency test, and the 32 who did not pass were accepted into the Program. Many of the students came from illiterate homes—they are first-generation learners and some could not even speak Gujarati properly. All were from lower income groups, and many fell below the poverty line.

⁷ Wardens are the caretakers responsible for Anjuman students in their dormitories.

2. Structure of Program

a. Class Structure

The Access Program was structured differently in each of the cities in which it was conducted in India. In most cases, the Program lasted for two years, although the initial grants may have been for one year and then extended. The Program in Ahmedabad was still working on a one-year grant at the time of the evaluation visit. Students attended classes two or three times per week after school or between shifts, and classes last for one to two hours, totaling between three and seven and a half hours per week, which the PAS staff and teachers agreed should be sufficient for students to improve their English from low intermediate to high intermediate or advanced. The students began with a range of competencies that teachers characterized as basic, low intermediate, intermediate, or high intermediate. Classes were intended to be only for the Access students, but in New Delhi and Ahmedabad, the Program administrator allowed a handful of students who comprised the waiting list for the Access Program to audit the classes, with the school or NGO absorbing the cost of materials for those auditors.

Classes were intended to comprise 25 or fewer students (with the auditors this number is sometimes exceeded). In New Delhi and Ahmedabad, the boys and girls were taught in the same classes, but sitting on opposite sides of the room; and in Chennai, boys and girls were in separate classes. The intended age range is from 14 to 18 years. However, in some cases, families did not have birth certificates for the children, and there are a small number of students in Access classes who are either overage or underage, but they are all in the eighth, ninth or tenth standard at their schools.

b. Teaching Methods

Overall, the level of teaching observed in India was excellent. Most of the teachers had considerable experience teaching English and were dedicated to helping the Access students make significant progress in their language acquisition. The variations by site are discussed below, highlighting the particular strengths of each Program.

New Delhi

In New Delhi, the Program administrator felt it was critical that the methodology used should encourage the students' curiosity. The day the evaluation team observed two Access classes, the students were presenting group work they had completed. The classes were very student-centered and permitted a great deal of creativity on the students' part. The Access teachers used an integrated skills approach to teaching English. They balanced instruction with skills development. English was the primary language of the classrooms and the teachers were all comfortable and competent in their use of English, although they did not use American English. The teachers explained the lesson objectives to the students orally.

The lesson plan was very open; the teachers had the freedom to bring in many different learning tools, including movies, songs, newspapers, and books. They employed an inquiry method that ensured that the classes are student-centered. Positive reinforcement was an important ingredient in the classes. Materials for situational learning were also important for increasing communication skills. The materials tended to focus on activities in which everyone had the opportunity to be a

performer so all of the participants practiced public speaking. Classes were sometimes conducted outdoors, and special field trips were organized.

The Access students often worked in pairs or in groups on exercises. Boys and girls studied together and did exercises that required them to interact in the classroom, and the teachers reported no differences in their approaches with the boys and girls. The classroom environment was respectful and nurturing for the students, and the teachers corrected mistakes using positive approaches. There were plenty of opportunities for students to ask questions, and the evaluation team observed the teachers giving the students an opportunity to answer their peers' questions prior to answering themselves. Throughout the course, the teachers provided feedback on the students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

Chennai

The evaluation team observed six of the eight Access classes in Chennai. The Access teachers used an integrated skills approach to teaching English. They balanced instruction with skills development. English was the primary language of the classrooms and the teachers were all comfortable and competent in their use of English, though they did not use American English. The teachers explained the lesson objectives to the students, both orally and in writing on the blackboard. Teachers were evaluated by the resource teacher and U.S. Consulate staff regularly. The resource teacher observed classes weekly and talked with the students to assess their progress.

The students worked in pairs or in groups on exercises and were grouped by ability. The classroom environment was respectful and nurturing for the students, and the teachers corrected mistakes using positive approaches. The teachers all knew their students, and the students frequently called the teachers "auntie" rather than "ma'am." There were many opportunities for students to ask questions. The teachers provided feedback on the students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. The teachers were able to listen to each student and provide individual feedback to each in terms of pronunciation, tone, and fluency (i.e., appropriate breaks in phrases and paragraphs).

Ahmedabad

The Access Program in Ahmedabad was the newest in India and the classes the evaluation team observed had only been in session for two months. The participants were considerably less experienced than their peers in New Delhi and Chennai. The teachers, for reasons noted earlier, were also less experienced in Ahmedabad, and the RELO and Program administrator had developed a strategy for providing additional training to the Access teachers. The evaluation team observed two classes taught by the same teacher. These classes were largely teacher-oriented rather than student-oriented. They were interactive, but did not apply an integrated skills approach to learning English. The intent was to have English as the primary language of the classroom, but instructions were generally given in Gujarati, which was appropriate for the students' level of English. For having had only two months of instruction, the students were just beginning to understand basic instructions in English.

The students played games that had them interacting across gender lines, but the classes the evaluation team observed did not include group work or pair work. The classroom environment was less nurturing and respectful than the others the team observed, but the teacher did provide

oral feedback on the students' speaking and reading skills. He also said he provided feedback on their listening and writing skills. Boys and girls were treated somewhat differently in one of the classes the evaluation team observed, with the teacher constructively criticizing the male students, but berating the female students when they made errors.

The Program administrator in Ahmedabad assessed the teachers regularly through classroom observations. He saw a need for some additional training, particularly in understanding the learning limitations of each student (learning styles and needs), the cultural impediments of having Muslim and Hindu students in the same class, improvement of ability to improvise, improvement in the use of the English language, and improvement in innovation in the classroom.

c. Teaching Content

The curricula were different in each of the three Program sites the evaluation team visited. The *World English* curriculum was initially provided to each grantee by the U.S. Consulate or American Center, and thus largely provided the basis for Access instruction. In each case, however, the in-country educational service provider found that it was inadequate for the students' needs. In each Program in India, the teachers designed the tests that they administered to their students to assess their progress.

Table 2.11 shows how teachers reported their classroom time was divided among skills and topics. The majority of the teachers in India described their primary method of teaching as focusing on teaching the children to communicate their ideas with less importance placed on grammatical accuracy, which is reflected, on average, in almost 36 percent of class time dedicated to speaking and listening. One teacher replied that his/her students learn English as they read English language textbooks and discuss specific topics such as U.S. culture.

TABLE 2.11 Access Classroom Time Allocated by Skill or Topic* India	
	(%)
Speaking and listening	35.8
Grammar	15.2
Vocabulary	14.0
Writing	12.5
U.S. cultures and values	9.3
Reading	6.5

Total Sample: 12 Access teachers

* Figures presented are averages of the responses of the twelve teachers.

Maintaining student interest was important as well. Table 2.12 shows how the students responded when asked to rate which classes had been their favorites. No large majority of students agreed on a particular lesson. Instead, the responses clustered around four of the six options provided: 1) "Higher Education" (47.8%); 2) "U.S. Culture" (46.5%); 3) "People around the World" (42.7%); and 4) "Life in the United States" (41.4%). Students reported that they favored the lessons on "Jobs and Careers" least (18.7%).

TABLE 2.12 Access Students' Favorite Lessons/Topics in the Program Class India	
	(%)
Higher Education	47.8
U.S. Culture	46.5
People around the World	42.7
Life in the U.S.	41.4
U.S History or Government	23.6
Jobs and Careers	18.7

Total Sample: 157 Access participants

Because the Access programs in India were administered by three different in-country educational service providers, the programs were quite distinct from one another and the remaining discussion of teaching content was divided by Program below.

New Delhi

In New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia contracted with a curriculum specialist from the National Council for Educational Research and Training to integrate the World English curriculum and materials provided by the American Center with the English language standards of the Indian education system, resulting in a three-level text called *Better English*. The Program administrator indicated her willingness to share this curriculum with other Access grantees, but needed to recover some of the costs incurred to do so. Student progress throughout the term was rated primarily on the basis of their satisfactory completion of assignments. Three of the four teachers said that the students would be assessed at the end of the class by an English proficiency test and would receive a grade based on their test score. They also said that motivation, attitude and effort would be taken into account in grading the students. The other teacher indicated that students would take an exam based on the materials covered in the course, but would not receive a final grade.

Because the partnership with Jamia Millia Islamia was built on personal relationships and the institution's standing in the community, the American Center had been careful not to push U.S. subject matter into the classroom. At the time of the evaluation site visit, however, the Program administrator and teachers requested information about the United States and U.S. culture and business practices that could be shared with the students.

Chennai

In Chennai, the Program used the *World English* text (three levels) as the basis for the Access instruction, but it was adapted somewhat for the Indian context. Beyond Level Three, the teachers designed their own course materials, and a senior resource teacher coordinated those materials and lessons. They planned and prepared about one month of lesson plans at a time. The U.S. Consulate provided some resource books, which are used to supplement the texts. As most of the teachers as English professors were at the tertiary level, and some have designed textbooks in the past, they are well equipped to create their own curriculum. The Access students took a formal exam at the end of the school year and have more informal assessments both written and orally, throughout the year. The end-of-year exam includes speaking and listening, reading and writing, and vocabulary, and some teachers indicated they might also include grammar and U.S. culture

and values. Two said that motivation, attitude, and effort would be taken into account in grading the students.

Ahmedabad

In Ahmedabad, the Program administrator had taken on the responsibility of finding supplementary materials to the *World English* curriculum provided by the U.S. Consulate in Mumbai. That was one area of concern for him, as he did not have a background in education. The RELO had offered support in this area and at the time of the visit, an English Language Fellow from the United States was scheduled to be placed in Ahmedabad, in part to support the Access Program through teacher training and curriculum development. The administrator's main concern was to ensure that students were not bored in the classroom. He preferred keeping the students engaged in learning rather than covering every single page in a book. He also placed emphasis on communication and vocabulary that was relevant to the students.

The administrator encouraged the teachers to use the Internet too, as there were a great number of resources available there. He spent much of his time looking for games and interactive tools and wanted to make use of Boggle, Scrabble, and magnetic poetry to reinforce learning words, letters and sounds. Student progress was assessed by tests and exams given periodically throughout the year. All of the teachers said that there would be an end-of-year exam based on the materials covered in the course (including speaking and listening, writing and reading, and some included grammar, vocabulary, and U.S. culture and values) that would include both written exercises and an oral interview. Two teachers also said that motivation, attitude, and effort would be taken into account in determining the students' final grades.

d. Student Retention

The administrators in India expected an 80 percent retention rate, which was lower than the 85 to 90 percent rate of retention that other ECA programs normally experience. However, the Access Program in New Delhi had only a 50 percent retention rate in its first year. The classes started in November, and when participants took their Grade 10 exams in March, many failed. Teachers also cited class schedule, transportation to classes, and competition with family responsibilities as other reasons for student attrition. To compensate for the decrease in enrollment, they began classes for another 50 students the following November. The teachers suggested moving the Program in the future to Grades 8 and 9 instead of 9 and 10, which would have some students starting at 13 or 14 rather than 14 or 15, but would still target the intended age group. Another suggestion provided was to have more faculty or a lower student-teacher ratio and more activities for the children.

In Chennai, there was no student attrition, because the Access Program classes were composed of students who lived at the school, and the wardens ensured that they attend class regularly. In Ahmedabad, the Program was too new to have recorded any attrition.

3. Resources

The resources to implement the Access Program came from both the Posts involved and the local partners. All three sites were created based on relationships between the American Center or U.S. Consulate and the local partners. The Access Program at Jamia Millia Islamia, for example, was built on the personal relationships of the Cultural Affairs staff at the American Center and the

Director of the secondary school. The school was not interested in working with the U.S. Government, but the Director saw the benefit to the students and wanted to give them a gateway to future prospects. In Chennai, the Anjuman School had an excellent relationship with the PAS staff at the U.S. Consulate. In Ahmedabad, the creation of the Access Program was forged through communication between the Director of SPRAT and the RELO. Furthermore, each of the three local partners chosen for the Access Program had a good reputation within the intended community prior to U.S. funding. The credibility of each of these partners was critical in making the Access Program successful.

The Access classrooms in India were all conducive to the learning process. At all three sites, teachers used a blackboard and chalk to write down lessons for the Access students. The Access classrooms in Jamia Millia Islamia were clean and spacious, but since they are used for university classes as well, they lacked posters, displays, computers and reference books. The teachers reported that they displayed student work in the classrooms, but this was not observed. In Chennai, the classrooms were clean and well-lit, but since they are also used for other non-Access classes, they lacked posters, displays and computers. The teachers brought an English-Tamil dictionary to class with them so students could look up words that they did not know. One teacher also brought in story books and read stories aloud to the class, using the pictures for reference. Audiovisual materials were not reported in use in New Delhi or Chennai.

In Ahmedabad, the Caravan Centers were community centers located in hard-to-serve neighborhoods. SPRAT has put some resources into renovating each Center, but the Access classes were often held in rooms not designed to be classrooms, which created some challenges (i.e., supporting columns in the middle of the room). The classrooms were set up in classroom style, with boys and girls sitting on opposite sides. There was no air conditioning, but fans were used to keep the rooms cool. The classrooms had some maps of India and the region of Gujarat on the walls, but no displays of student work or U.S. Government or culture were observed. Every Caravan Center had a television for science films and a computer with an Internet connection. They also had CD players and CDs for listening exercises but rarely used them.

Many of the materials used for the Access Program were provided by the American Center or U.S. Consulate, but were individually adapted by the local partners to meet local needs. The American Center in New Delhi initially provided the *World English* books from McGraw Hill and other supplementary materials. The New Delhi and Chennai sites both used the *World English* books, but found that they needed to be adapted to local circumstances. In New Delhi, the Program administrator hired the National Council for Education Research and Training to reconcile the course material provided by the American Center and the Indian environment in which they live to create a curriculum. In Chennai, the Program used the *World English* texts as the basis for the Access instruction, but adapted them somewhat for Indian context. In Ahmedabad, the grantee received books from the RELO, but SPRAT also created its own materials to address the unique situation in the city.

The current RELO for India arrived in New Delhi in July 2005. He had visited all of the sites in India and had become a known presence among the students and teachers. In Ahmedabad, he visited the Caravan Centers twice, and each time he worked with the students in groups to practice English dialogues. The students were able to pair up and practice their spoken English, which gave the Access teachers useful tools for future lessons. The Ahmedabad administrator and the RELO were also working together on a strategy to improve the teaching abilities of the Access

teachers with an English Language Fellow who has recently arrived in India. The RELO had also been very involved in the development of the Access materials.

4. Activities

All three sites had had extensive interaction with the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, the American Centers and U.S. Consulates. In New Delhi, for example, the students visited to the American Center, and the CAO/RELO staff visited the schools regularly. Staff from the Embassy were encouraged to speak to the Access students about their life experience and how the students can take advantage of their English speaking skills. In Chennai, the students had visited the U.S. Consulate to see the library, an art exhibit, and films, and received a visit from the U.S. Ambassador. In addition, Anjuman board members were invited to Consulate events. The U.S. Consulate staff had been very active in monitoring the Access Program.

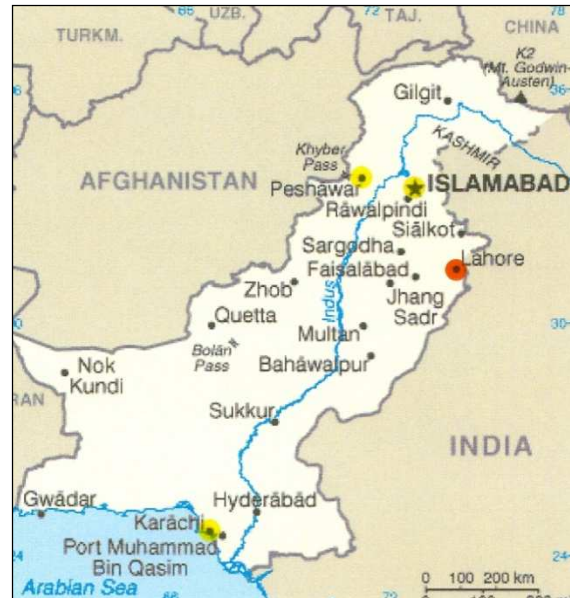
a. Alumni

At the time of the evaluation visit, there were no alumni as the second-year groups were nearing the end of their Program. No concrete plans had been developed for maintaining alumni involvement in the Program, but the PAS staff were interested to learn what other countries had tried or were considering.

Pakistan

1. Program Description

The Access Program in Lahore, Pakistan began in two schools in September 2004 and three others in November 2004. The goal at the beginning of the Program was to select poor, bright, motivated students and provide them with English language classes to enable them to meet the standards at English language medium schools. Although additional programs had begun in Islamabad, Peshawar, and Karachi, the oldest and only one included in the evaluation was the Program in **Lahore**.



PAS staff in Lahore approached several NGOs about participating in the Program and the Cooperation for Advancement, Rehabilitation and Education Foundation (CARE Foundation) seemed the most interested. In 1998, the CARE Foundation applied for and won a grant to adopt 10 government schools in Lahore. Since the first schools were adopted in 1998, more than 100 schools were now under CARE's purview, all in neighborhoods that would be considered disadvantaged. The Cultural Affairs Office was aware of CARE's successes with its adopted schools and selected CARE to implement the Access Program in five of its adopted public schools, also known as centers. The Access Program was CARE's first experience with international funding.

Among CARE's many strengths were its vision, its outreach, and its roots in the local neighborhoods. Ministry of Education involvement had been minimal; CARE and the U.S. Consulate appear to have its confidence.

Two main considerations in the selection of the schools were that they be centrally located to surrounding schools from which they could draw students, and that the school administration would provide classroom space and support for the Program in terms of utilities and cleaning. Selection of the in-country educational service provider was based mainly on recommendations by CARE and school interest in the Access Program.

According to PAS staff, while the Missionary schools and private schools teach English in depth, the public schools in Pakistan barely provide minimum English schooling, and frequently it is taught incorrectly and with poor pronunciation by poorly trained teachers. English is primarily taught as literature rather than as a language. This means that children attending the public schools are at a great disadvantage in competing for tertiary schooling. The Access Program, then, was seen as a way of addressing this disparity.

The Cultural Affairs Office sees the goal of the Access Program as an outreach to our [the Muslim] community.

- Cultural Affairs Office, Pakistan

a. Teacher Selection

The CARE administrators selected the Access teachers; there were five teachers and one substitute teacher at the time of the evaluation. The Program administrators chose the best-qualified teachers they could find to participate in the Access Program—teachers who were enthusiastic, flexible, and energetic, who spoke good English, and who could successfully teach. Teacher recruitment was done primarily by word of mouth. Finding high quality English teachers was one of the biggest challenges for this Program. The teachers' remuneration is approximately \$500 per month. The Access assistant administrator visited each school once per week, observed the classes, and completed a teacher and a student checklist based on her observations.

b. Student Selection

Students who were interested in participating in the Program registered with the CARE Foundation and then took a short proficiency test that was designed by CARE and approved by the former PAO. Those who passed the proficiency test passed to the second interview stage. CARE administrators and English teachers conducted the applicant interviews, which focused on future plans and goals of the applicants. As long as the applicants were attending a CARE-administered school, they did not need special parental permission, but any students coming from non CARE-administered schools were required to submit special permission forms signed by their parents.

2. Structure of Program

a. Class Structure

The Access Program evolved over the two years of its existence. The Program began with one group and 30 students per class in each of the five Access schools, but four months into the Program, the CARE administrators realized that they could take in more participants. By tailoring the pace and the materials, they were able to add a second group of 30 students at each of the schools.

The Access Program in Lahore, Pakistan was also a two-year program. Students attended classes five days a week after school for an hour and a half each day (eight hours per week). Total class time amounted to 640 hours of instruction, which the administrator and all the teachers felt allowed students to progress from one level to another. The teachers characterized the students' level of English upon entry to the Program as anywhere between absolute beginner to intermediate. The classes served only Access students, and each class was comprised of 25 students. Boys and girls attended classes together, often sitting on opposite sides of the classroom. The students in Lahore ranged from 16 to 18 years old. Access classes were held at five schools around Lahore, and students from any of the 114 schools in Lahore administered by the CARE Foundation were eligible to apply for the Access Program. They typically attended classes at the school closest to where they live.

b. Teaching Approach

The evaluation team observed two classes at different Access schools in Lahore. The Access teachers used an integrated skills approach to teaching English. English was the primary language of the classrooms and the teachers were all comfortable and competent in their use of American English. They balanced instruction with skills development. The two classes observed were very different in their structure, in that one displayed much more interaction among the

students and between the students and teacher, than the other class, but both classes were highly effective.

The classroom environment was respectful and nurturing for the students. Teachers used the same approach for male and female students. Mistakes were corrected using positive methods. The teachers provided feedback on the students' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. There were plenty of opportunities for students to ask questions. The students worked in pairs or in groups on exercises.

Another component of the teaching approach in Lahore was frequent teacher observation and feedback by the program coordinator. While all Access programs observed in SCA included some ongoing assessment of the teachers' skills, the Access Program in Lahore had established a weekly observation for each of the teachers and the students in their classes. Teachers were scored on habits, such as punctuality and behaviors, body language and facial expressions, interaction with students, and use of teaching tools, among others. Students were evaluated on their completion of assignments (each classroom has a poster with stickers for completed assignments by each student), progress in skills, pronunciation, and their test and quiz scores.

c. Teaching Content

Early in the Program, each school or center did its own testing and followed its own curriculum. By the time of the visit, the Access Program in Lahore had coordinated its curriculum and testing regimens so that all the Access students were receiving comparable services. Each quarter, the teachers and program coordinator developed the materials and lesson plans for the next quarter, including:

- *World English* textbook
- History (e.g., ancient civilizations)
- Professions
- Biographies (e.g., Nelson Mandela, Leonardo Da Vinci, etc.)
- Computer exercises
- Extracurricular activities (e.g., visit to U.S. Embassy/Consulate, etc.)
- Quarterly exams

The centralized curriculum also specified the kinds of activities (beyond those specified in the *World English* books) that the teachers should conduct in their classrooms for each of four skill areas: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Speaking activities included oral presentations, discussions, dialogues, debates and poetry recitals. Listening activities included radio programs or songs and movies. Reading activities expanded to magazine and newspaper articles and short stories. Writing activities included essays, creative writing, and letters. The centralized exams at the end of each quarter helped the teachers and administrator assess the progress the students had made and the areas needing improvement. The students also took a final examination at the end of the school term.

I see a successful Access student as one who can speak on a variety of topics with comprehension, confidence, and fluency.

- Access Teacher, Pakistan

Table 2.13 shows how teachers reported their classroom time was divided by skills and topics. Of the five teachers responding to the question, two described their primary method of teaching as focusing on teaching the children to communicate their ideas with less importance placed on grammatical accuracy, which is reflected in the 40 percent of class time dedicated to speaking and listening. Two teachers also replied that their students learn English as they read English language textbooks and discuss specific topics such as U.S. culture. One teacher reported that the students study grammar and are able to translate English sentences into their native language.

TABLE 2.13 Average Access Classroom Time Allocation by Skill or Topic* Pakistan	
	(%)
Speaking and listening	40.0
Reading	15.8
Grammar	14.2
Writing	13.3
Vocabulary	10.0
U.S. cultures and values	6.7

Total Sample: 6 Access teachers

* Figures presented are averages of the responses of 6 teachers.

When asked which lesson topics were their favorite, most of the students replied that they favored the lessons on “Higher Education” (78.5%, see Table 2.14). Other popular topics were “Life in the United States” (44.6%) and “People around the World” (43.1%). The lessons they rated least favorite were those on “Jobs and Careers” (14.6%).

TABLE 2.14 Access Students’ Favorite Lessons/Topics in the Program Class Pakistan	
	(%)
Higher Education	78.5
Life in the U.S.	44.6
People around the World	43.1
U.S. Culture	33.1
U.S History or Government	26.9
Jobs and Careers	14.6

Total Sample: 130 Access participants

d. Student Retention

At the end of the first year, a sizable group of students, many of those completing Grade 10, left the Program because their class schedules at the colleges they were attending prevented them from coming to classes. Teachers also said students left the Program due to conflicts with their regular classes, lack of transportation, and competition with family responsibilities. Overall, 50 of the original 300 students left the Program. CARE Foundation selected new students to replace those who left and has continued to maintain the number of students. It has made it somewhat more difficult for the teachers to teach across levels, but some teachers divide the classes into two groups to accommodate those needs. The teachers and administrator were open to any

strategies other programs had used to improve attendance. One of the teachers suggested that more activities might help and another thought a lower student-teacher ratio would help as well. A third thought that greater community awareness of the Program would help increase student retention.

3. Resources

Both the U.S. Consulate and the CARE Foundation provided resources to implement the Program. The RELO visited Lahore approximately two years ago to assist the U.S. Consulate in developing the Access Program. He assisted the Consulate by helping to select textbooks, provided guidance on ESL instruction, and spoke to classrooms. Teachers from the Access Program have been included in workshops organized by the RELO for English language teachers.

The Access Program also provided books, a small stipend for student transportation, funding for photocopying, magazine subscriptions, a small library, and U.S. videos. The grant to CARE also included funds for a small library for each Center. The teachers said that the students love reading, and on library day they are permitted to choose a book to take home and read.

The Access classrooms observed in Pakistan were rich with student work, posters, and displays. Students sat at two-person wooden tables, with boys and girls separated by an aisle. A chalkboard and whiteboard were in the room as well as maps, charts, and an attendance record. The teachers had also hung some posters or displays on U.S. culture and government. The teachers supplemented the *World English* texts with magazines, newspaper articles, oral exercises, book reports and other activities. Each Access classroom had a library with books that the students could check out and take home to read. Although it was not observed, the teachers said they used audio-visual materials to enhance lessons. The classrooms also had computers, but the teachers reported that they were old, and they were more likely to take the classes to the schools' computer labs for computer-assisted lessons.

4. Activities

The Cultural Affairs Office invited each center to visit the U.S. Consulate for an Access Program orientation. The students were shown a movie in English about life in America. The students were introduced to the services of the Consulate and each received an Access U.S. flag mug and tee shirt. There was a question and answer session with the Acting Public Affairs Officer. Other than the interaction with the consulate, no other community organizations have been involved in the Access Program in Lahore. There was press coverage of the Access Program students' visit to the U.S. Consulate, but for the most part, the Program received little public notice.

a. Alumni

The Access Program in Lahore will not continue beyond the August 2006 conclusion of the second year of the Program, as the U.S. Consulate understood a recent cable to mean that the Program should be moved from large cities and relocated in smaller communities. The Consulate would like to find a way to stay in touch with the Access Program alumni. At the time of the evaluation visit, there were no alumni as the second-year group was nearing the end of its Program. It maintains an alumni database, and the Access students will be added so they are included in general programs, events, and the annual U.S. history course that is offered by the Consulate. No concrete plans had been developed for maintaining alumni involvement in the Program, but the PAS staff was interested to learn what other countries had tried in that area.

3 EVALUATION OUTCOMES

Chapter Three describes evaluation outcomes and is divided into four sections: (A) Overall Assessment of the Program – NEA Region; (B) NEA Outcomes by Country; (C) Overall Assessment of the Program – SCA Region; and (D) SCA Outcomes by Country.

A. Overall Assessment of the Program – Near Eastern Affairs Region

Overall, the PAS staff were very satisfied with the Access Program in Morocco, Lebanon and Oman. In Morocco, the PAO especially complimented the quality of students, parental and Ministry support, media attention and support from centers as very satisfactory. PAS staff in Lebanon reported a high level of satisfaction with aspects such as Program quality, parental and family acceptance, instructional support from the schools, and media attention to the Program. The PAS staff in Muscat also reported high levels of satisfaction with Program elements.

1. Satisfaction with the Program

Access students in all three countries reported strong levels of satisfaction with the overall Access Program outputs. Some 81 percent of Access students in Morocco agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the Program administration, content and variety of experience, and 87 percent agreed that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the relevance of the Program to professional or educational development. Students in Lebanon were very enthusiastic about the Access Program, with 99 percent of students in agreement or strong agreement with satisfaction of Program content, and 98 percent in agreement or strong agreement with satisfaction of the Program administration. Omani students were also satisfied with Program quality: 91 percent of respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with Program content, and 90 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with Program administration. Table 3.1 shows country and regional outcomes for the overall outputs.

TABLE 3.1 Access Students' Satisfaction with Program Components – Agree or Strongly Agree NEA Region				
	Morocco (%)	Lebanon (%)	Oman (%)	NEA Region (%)
Administration	81.4	97.5	84.9	87.5
Content	81.4	98.8	90.7	89.7
Variety of Experience	81.4	95.2	89.5	88.2
Relevance of Program	87.3	95.2	87.2	89.6

Total Sample: 271 Access participants

Most Access participants felt that the length of their Access classes was about right (76.4%) and that the length of their entire Access Program was about right (63.8%). Access students who did

not feel that the length was about right wanted longer classes (17.3%) and a lengthier program (35.4%). Very few students thought that either the classes or the Program were too long.

This Program helped us a lot to open our minds to new perspectives and cultures ... especially to the American people and government, but still the greatest impact is on our language skills.

- Focus Group Participant, Morocco

Peers' perceptions of the Access Program also indicate that Access Program classes are useful and desirable. All but one of the peers interviewed in the NEA region said they would like to participate in the classes their friends take. They reported that their friends in the Access Program said the Access classes were educational and fun. Table 3.2 shows the breakdowns by country.

Table 3.2 Peer Interest in Participating in Access Classes NEA Region								
	Morocco		Lebanon		Oman		NEA Region	
	Yes (%)	Total Sample (n)	Yes (%)	Total Sample (n)	Yes (%)	Total Sample (n)	Yes (%)	Total Sample (n)
Male	100.0	14	85.7	7	100.0	4	96.0	25
Female	100.0	11	100.0	13	--	0	100.0	24
Overall	100.0	25	95.0	20	100.0	4	98.0	49

2. Short Term Outcomes

a. Improved English Language

Access student and alumni felt their English language competency had improved because of the Access Program. Although the students interviewed for this evaluation were at a variety of different points in their Access Program, responses to the assessment of language ability while still completing their study were markedly improved from their beginning levels. Since 93 percent of Access participants in the NEA region said improving their English was their aim in enrolling in the Access Program, this is a very important result, both for the students and as an indicator of success for the Program.

While measurement of English language acquisition is not standardized or formally institutionalized in the programs across the NEA region, stakeholders felt that Access students have made noticeable progress in their English language skills. Current Access students and alumni were very enthusiastic and proud of their improvements and command of the English language. Some even insisted that interviews and focus group discussion be held in English so they could practice and demonstrate their proficiency.

Program administrators and teachers alike indicated that the students had improved their English language speaking abilities, in particular, and many were proud of their students' achievements and progress. Overall, the teachers thought that the most significant benefit of the Program for

the students is that they have learned English or improved upon their English language skills. Many felt that this is essential in order to compete for jobs or pursue higher education.

When parents of Access students across the three countries were asked if their own knowledge of English had increased during the time their children were in Access training, 16.4 percent said yes, very much or a great deal; 34.5 percent said yes, some; and 49.1 percent said not very much or not at all. Similarly, peers of Access students were asked if they had learned anything from their friends in the Access Program; after the Program, 84 percent said they had learned some English, and 56 percent had practiced English speaking with their Access friends.

b. Positive Attitudes Toward the United States

Twenty-six percent of Access participants in the region viewed the U.S. Government in a favorable light (strongly or generally favorable), while nearly half of the respondents said their view was neutral (neither favorable nor unfavorable). Approximately 25 percent of the participants held negative views of the U.S. Government. Positive effects of the program on perceptions of the U.S. Government are evident. When asked if their views on the U.S. Government had changed because of their Access Program classes, 47 percent of participants said their view of the U.S. Government had become more favorable or much more favorable because of Access.

We had very [little] information about the United States, but after the Access Program our information improved a lot...and I think all of us here have a very positive view about the U.S.

- Focus Group Participant, Morocco

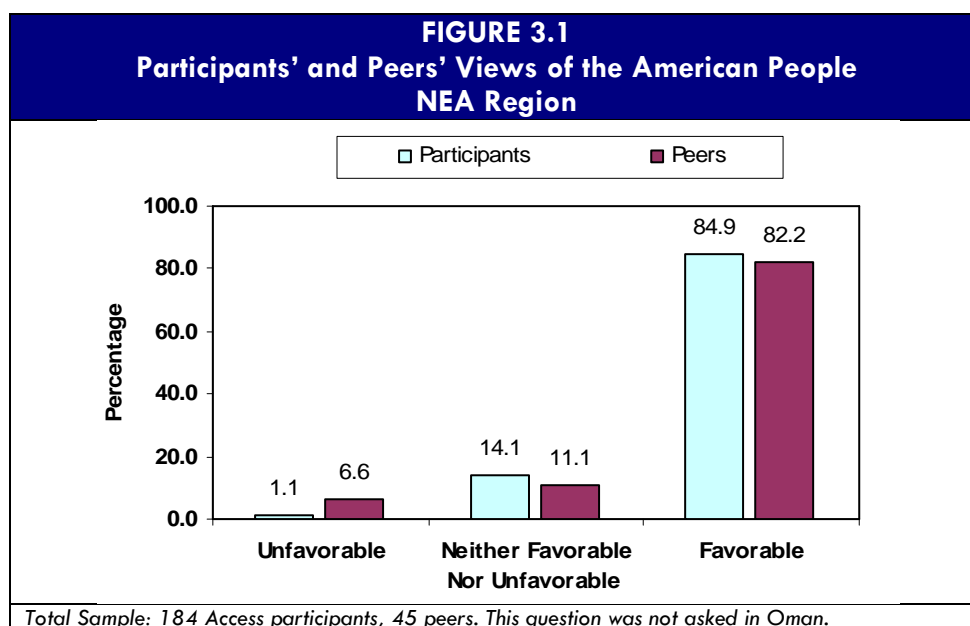
In contrast, none of the peers interviewed in Morocco and Lebanon said they felt strongly favorably towards the U.S. Government, and only 14 percent said they felt generally favorably. However, similar to the Access students' responses, 25 percent of peers said they had a generally unfavorable view of the U.S. Government. Table 3.3 shows the full list of peer and participant responses for the NEA region (Morocco and Lebanon).

TABLE 3.3 Participants' and Peers' Views of the United States Government NEA Region					
	Strongly Favorable (%)	Generally Favorable (%)	Neither Favorable nor Unfavorable (%)	Generally Unfavorable (%)	Strongly Unfavorable (%)
Participants	2.2	23.9	48.9	14.7	10.3
Peers	0.0	13.6	59.1	25.0	2.3

Total Sample: 184 Access participants, 44 peers. This question was not asked in Oman.

When asked to identify how they felt about the American people, 84.9 percent of Access participants in Morocco and Lebanon held a strongly or generally favorable view. This is similar to the responses of the peers interviewed in these two countries (82.2% report positive views of the American people – either strongly or generally favorable). While 6.6 percent of the peers

reported unfavorable views of the American people, only 1.1 percent of the Access participants in these two countries reported unfavorable views. (see Figure 3.1).



Access students interviewed for this evaluation reported an overall improvement in their perceptions of the American people and the United States. Ninety-two percent of Access respondents in Morocco and Lebanon said that their views of the American people had become more favorable or much more favorable due to their participation in the Program (see Table 3.4). None of the Access participants' in these two countries reported that their views towards the American people had become less favorable.

Table 3.4 Change in Views of U.S. Government and American People NEA Region					
	Much More Favorable (%)	More Favorable (%)	No Change (%)	Less Favorable (%)	Much Less Favorable (%)
U.S. Government	4.9	42.0	49.4	3.1	0.6
American people	46.0	46.0	8.0	0.0	0.0

Total Sample: U.S. Government: 162 Access participants. This question was not asked in Oman.

American People: 163 Access participants. This question was not asked in Oman.

Although students were a bit more ambivalent towards the U.S. Government, nearly half (47%) had a more favorable or much more favorable view after participation in the Access Program, and only a small percentage of respondents (3.7%) said their perceptions had become less favorable or much less favorable as a result of their participation in the program. In general, there is every indication that students feel their participation in the Access Program has led to more favorable attitudes towards the United States.

c. Positive Changes in Student Aspirations and Self-Confidence

The self-assessment provided by Access students regarding their interpersonal and public speaking abilities reflect a group that is more confident, when compared to the peer group. Table 3.5 shows that 84 percent of the NEA Access participants rate themselves as excellent or good in terms of self-reliance and listening to the suggestions and concerns of others. Eighty percent of them believe they are excellent or good when it comes to tolerance of others and discussing their beliefs and/or values. Noticeably fewer of them are comfortable rating themselves so high in terms of their public speaking – roughly 59 percent of the NEA participants indicate they are excellent or good at speaking in public.

I became more self-confident and took initiative, and I learned how to hear others because in our life when we discuss a subject... we don't accept change. After Access, I learned to listen to others to correct my opinion if I have something wrong.

- Focus Group Participant, Lebanon

Likewise, the Access peers in the NEA region are also very confident in terms of their abilities; particularly, self-reliance and listening to others (87% or more indicate they are excellent or good in these two areas). One area where the peers, as a group, report being less confident in their own abilities than the Access students is self-expression. While 81 percent of the Access students feel they are excellent or good at discussing their beliefs/values and 74 percent of them said they are excellent or good at expressing ideas and feelings, 69 percent of the peers rate themselves this way in terms of discussing beliefs and 68 percent of them give themselves a high score when it comes to expressing ideas and feelings.

Although the responses do not reveal differences between the Access students and peers, many Access teachers in the region commented on the noticeable improvement students have made in expressing themselves in class. Their self-confidence has increased, and they find they have an easier time expressing their ideas and feelings.

TABLE 3.5 Comparison of Measures of Self-Confidence between Access Students and Peers NEA Region								
	Excellent (%)		Good (%)		Fair (%)		Poor (%)	
	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer
Being self-reliant, independent, relying on yourself	39.1	33.9	44.6	53.6	15.5	8.9	0.7	3.6
Speaking in public	25.1	33.9	33.6	42.9	33.2	17.9	8.1	5.4
Listening to other people's suggestions or concerns	40.6	48.2	43.9	41.1	12.2	10.7	3.3	0.0
Expressing ideas and feelings	29.9	16.1	44.3	51.8	21.0	26.8	4.8	5.4
Being tolerant of others different than you	41.3	41.1	39.5	35.7	17.0	21.4	2.2	1.8
Discussing your beliefs/values	29.9	35.7	50.9	33.9	17.3	26.8	1.8	3.6

Total Sample: 271 Access participants, 56 peers.

d. Positive Attention in the Media

Publicity for Access in the NEA region has varied in its scope; some countries have welcomed media attention, whereas others have shied away from it in an effort to keep the Program from becoming too “politicized.”

PAS staff in Morocco were enthusiastic about media coverage for events such as the Ambassador’s visit to hand out Program completion certificates or having students visit the U.S. Embassy to participate in cultural events like a Fourth of July picnic and Thanksgiving Dinner. They felt this media attention helped to increase publicity for the Program as well as improve the status of the centers that host the Access classes.

However, some respondents felt that too much media attention would harm the Program’s reputation if the U.S. Government sponsorship were perceived to have a hidden agenda. This was particularly true in Lebanon where parents might be more cautious about sending their children to a U.S. Government-sponsored class. Despite this low profile, the media is eager to cover Access activities. At one site visit, a member of the local media broke into an interview with the Access teacher in an attempt to take pictures and interview the evaluation team. As any requests from local media are routinely referred to Public Diplomacy staff at the local U.S. Embassy, no interview was granted, and the reporter was escorted from the school by the school’s administrative staff.

e. Synergy Among Programs

Throughout the NEA region, PAS staff have maximized resources by leveraging existing programs to provide resources for Access. In Morocco and Lebanon, the *Books in a Box* program materials were being distributed to Access teachers in an effort to broaden the variety of supplementary materials. In Lebanon, connections also have been made between Access and the BRIDGE Program. One Access student specifically mentioned the BRIDGE program when asked about other DoS programs. In Oman, Access centers in Salalah and Al-Buraimi have utilized the American Corners as a resource for U.S.-centered literature and supplementary materials.

The English Language Fellows in Morocco and Lebanon have also been called upon to serve as a resource for the Access program. While the role of the EL Fellow has not been formally defined in relation to the Access program, an EL Fellow in Morocco had made visits to Access classes/events in Meknes, and the EL Fellow in Lebanon was actually working out of the Beirut, AMIDEAST office. The AMIDEAST country coordinators intended to make greater use of this vital resource in future activities of the Access Program.

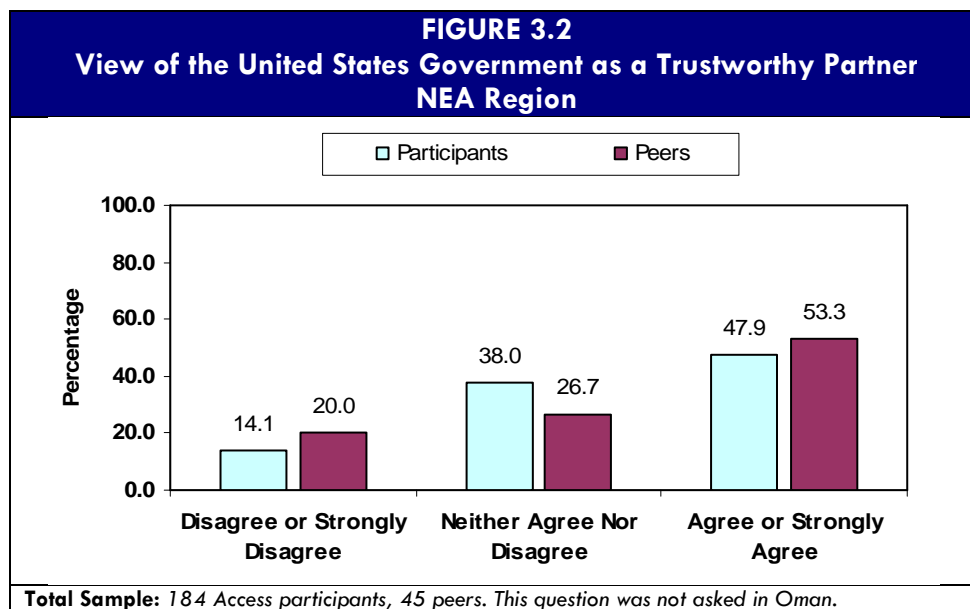
The YES Program, a DoS-sponsored exchange program for youths in which students live with an American family for a year and attend a U.S. high school, in particular was mentioned with impressive frequency as a desirable follow-on for the Access Program. However, despite students’ and administrators’ overwhelming interest in YES, the Access Program in some countries in the region (e.g., Morocco and Lebanon) is not a good feeder for YES due to eligibility issues. This is because the two programs are focusing on roughly the same age group, so that many students who complete the Access Program are no longer eligible for YES. This is further complicated by the fact that some countries have a minimum English competency level, which some students cannot achieve without first completing the Access Program. If students began Access training at a younger age, it would possibly increase the number of students eligible for the YES Program.

3. Long Term Outcomes

a. Enhanced Mutual Understanding

When parents of current Access students were asked whether they felt their children had learned something about U.S. culture or society from the Access Program, a vast majority (88.5%) said their child had been taught about U.S. culture through Access. Further, a sizeable number of the Access Program participants express positive views of the United States in relation to their home country (see Figure 3.2). Roughly half of the participants and peers in the NEA region view the U.S. government as a trustworthy partner for their home country (47.9% in the case of Access students and 53.3% in the case of peers). Thirty-eight percent of the participants and 27.6 percent of the peers express neutral views. The two groups diverge slightly in their expressions of negative views of the United States. Only 14.1 percent of the Access students said that they did not feel the United States was a trustworthy partner (disagreeing or strongly disagreeing) compared to 20 percent of the peers.

One issue mentioned specifically by teachers in the NEA region was the appropriateness of materials to the cultural norms of the country. Topics that U.S. students might consider mundane are taboo in some of the more conservative Muslim populations. For instance, a teacher related an anecdote about a unit in the textbook that talked about wearing bikinis on the beach and the need to “keep in shape” in order to look good in a swimsuit. The students in his class were curious about the reference, but he felt the need to be cautious in explaining the context, in order to avoid offending the students’ personal or religious beliefs. These types of issues must be considered in selecting materials and curricula for use with Access students to learn about U.S. culture.



b. Increased Leadership Roles

Access students and peers were asked to assess their leadership skills taking into account a number of different leadership characteristics (see Table 3.6). A majority of Access students and peers alike feel confident in their abilities across all the different leadership areas – between 74 and 87 percent of the Access participants said they feel they are excellent or good and between

71 and 85 percent of the peers indicated this as well. Although the number of individuals who rated themselves as performing poorly in these areas is low, a larger percentage of the peers indicated that their skills in four of the five areas (leading a team; solving problems; planning for the future; and willing to make changes in the community) are poor.

TABLE 3.6 Comparison of Measures of Leadership Skills between Access Students and Peers NEA Region								
	Excellent (%)		Good (%)		Fair (%)		Poor (%)	
	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer
Leading a team and motivating others	29.5	21.4	45.0	50.0	21.8	23.2	3.7	5.4
Being flexible	29.2	35.7	50.6	39.3	17.3	25.0	3.0	0.0
Solving problems	20.7	41.1	53.9	33.9	23.2	19.6	2.2	5.4
Planning for the future	43.9	50.0	42.1	35.7	12.2	8.9	1.8	5.4
Willing to make changes in your community	50.2	41.1	37.3	41.1	10.3	14.3	2.2	3.6

Total Sample: 271 Access participants, 56 peers.

c. Improved Employability

After completing the Access Program, I would like to study for three years in the university. I would like to major in English literature and I hope to have the chance later to go for higher education in the United States.

- Focus Group Participant, Morocco

One consequence of the Access Program is that, with good English skills, students are more employable. When NEA Access students were asked why they chose to participate in the Program, the second most popular response was “to get a scholarship to study in the United States” (at 72.3%) followed by “to get a job someday” (at 58.7%). School administrators also said that they believed that the Access participants’ improved English language skills would provide Access alumni with enhanced educational and job opportunities, as well as increased chances to participate in other U.S.-sponsored exchange or education programs. Parents of Access students also were asked how they thought the Access Program would benefit their child. Improved job opportunities and increased likelihood of a university education were mentioned most frequently.

One of the unintended benefits of the Access Program has been the socialization of male and female students in a safe environment for all. Since male-female interaction is limited to family groups in some of the communities in which Access is active, students may have never before had an opportunity to be in an environment with those of the opposite sex who are not family members. Becoming comfortable in this kind of environment will contribute to their ability to succeed in the workplace in the future, which was thought to be a very important consequence of the Program by several of the teachers.

B. NEA Outcomes by Country

1. Morocco

a. English Communication Skills

As part of the evaluation, Access participants were asked to assess their own level of English language ability at the start of the Program, and then to determine their current ability (both for students and alumni). As shown in Table 3.7, before the Access Program, no more than a quarter of the Moroccan students felt their skills were excellent or good in any of the five categories listed. Students graded themselves weakest in speaking ability (with fewer than 10% of the students grading their beginning speaking ability as excellent or good). Understanding spoken English was the second-weakest skill area (13.7%), followed by grammar (18.6%).

TABLE 3.7 Access Students Reporting Their English Language Skills as Excellent or Good Morocco				
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Country (%)
Speaking	Before Access	6.7	12.3	9.8
	Now – Current Students	65.6	69.8	68.2
	Now – Alumni*	76.9	50.0	70.6
Reading	Before Access	24.4	24.6	24.5
	Now – Current Students	93.7	84.9	88.2
	Now – Alumni*	84.7	75.0	82.4
Writing	Before Access	22.2	28.1	25.5
	Now – Current Students	75.0	69.8	71.7
	Now – Alumni*	77.0	75.0	76.5
Grammar	Before Access	17.8	19.3	18.6
	Now – Current Students	59.4	64.1	62.4
	Now – Alumni*	77.0	50.0	70.6
Understanding Spoken English	Before Access	6.6	19.3	13.7
	Now – Current Students	62.5	75.5	70.6
	Now – Alumni*	76.9	25.0	64.7

Total Sample: 32 males and 53 females, for a total of 85 Access participants.

13 males and 4 females, for a total of 17 Alumni.

*Current versus alumni status was self-reported by respondents.

Although current students interviewed for this evaluation were at a variety of different points in their Access Program (some were completing their second year of instruction while some were only in their first year), they reported marked improvement of their skills. Even in grammar, where most Moroccan students felt they struggled, 62 percent of the students graded themselves as excellent or good in their abilities. In their strongest area, reading, 88 percent of the students in

Morocco reported themselves to be good or excellent, and none of the current students graded their own skills as weak or none in either speaking or reading.

Of the 17 respondents who identified themselves as having completed the Program, their assessment of their English language abilities was on par with or slightly weaker than the current students. Overall, almost six percent of the respondents rated their grammar ability as weak or none, but in no other category did they grade themselves at the lowest levels of ability. The strongest skills were reported as reading (82.4%) and writing (76.5%), which mirrors reported strengths from the current students' responses.

Moroccan students in focus groups all felt their progress was excellent, and several students made favorable comparisons of their Access classes to the high school English classes, which they felt were not as helpful in advancing their language skills. It is interesting to note that no significant difference was observed in students' levels of Program satisfaction or in perceived improvement in their English language skills between the integrated and non-integrated Access students interviewed in Morocco.

When peers of Moroccan Access students were asked if their friends had taught them anything about English, 84 percent said they had learned some English from the Access students. In addition, 56 percent of the Moroccan peers said they practice English with their friends in Access. However, it is interesting to note that of those 56 percent, only 27 percent of the female peers replied in the affirmative, while 79 percent of the male peers responded that, yes, they practiced English with their Access friends.

b. Knowledge of the United States

Many of the Moroccan Access students had been exposed to some aspect of life in the United States prior to beginning Access, primarily the U.S. economic system or U.S. culture and values (see Table 3.8).

TABLE 3.8 Access Students' Prior Lessons on U.S. in Their Regular School Classes Morocco			
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Country (%)
U.S. System of Government	24.4	26.3	25.5
U.S. Legal System	8.9	17.5	13.7
U.S. Culture and Values	51.1	36.8	43.1
U.S. Economic System	77.8	78.9	78.4
Total Sample (n)	45	57	102

In spite of that prior exposure, participants in Morocco reported a strong U.S. cultural component in their Access classes. A large majority, 78 percent of respondents, said they had learned something about the United States through the Program. Compared to results in other countries, the Access students in Morocco reported having as good or better knowledge of the United States as their Access peers elsewhere. The Access students also generally knew more about the United States than their non-Access peers, as shown in Table 3.9.

TABLE 3.9 Access Participants' and Peers' Knowledge of the United States Morocco										
Topic	Advanced Knowledge (%)		Beyond Basic Knowledge (%)		Basic Knowledge (%)		Less Than Basic (%)		No Knowledge (%)	
	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer
U.S. democracy	9.8	0.0	4.9	0.0	30.4	16.0	31.4	64.0	23.5	20.0
U.S. economy	12.7	20.0	16.7	0.0	43.1	32.0	20.6	32.0	6.9	16.0
U.S. values and culture	5.9	12.0	16.7	0.0	52.0	24.0	22.5	60.0	2.9	4.0
Religious and ethnic diversity	12.7	4.0	9.8	4.0	31.4	24.0	29.4	24.0	16.7	44.0
Freedom of speech/Press	14.7	16.0	20.6	4.0	39.2	24.0	17.6	28.0	7.8	28.0
Voluntary community service	10.8	12.0	8.8	8.0	16.7	4.0	33.3	20.0	30.4	56.0
Daily life in the U.S.	6.9	16.0	14.7	--	29.4	12.0	27.5	32.0	21.6	40.0

Total Sample: 102 Access participants, 25 peers

In addition to their understanding and knowledge about the United States, participants were asked to assess how much their knowledge of the United States had increased through their Access Program classes (see Table 3.10). Areas where respondents said their knowledge had increased substantially were U.S. values and cultures (75.6%) and daily life in the United States (68.3%), and more Access students in Morocco reported learning about U.S. values and culture than in any other country in the evaluation.

TABLE 3.10 Changes in Participants' Understanding and Knowledge of the United States Morocco		
	Moderate to Substantial Change (%)	Minimal to No Change (%)
U.S. values and culture	75.6	24.4
Daily life in the United States	68.3	31.7
Freedom of speech and the press in the U.S.	56.1	43.9
U.S. democracy	47.6	52.4
Voluntary community service	45.1	54.9
Religious and Ethnic diversity in the United States	41.5	58.6
U.S. economy	30.5	69.5

Total Sample: 82 Access participants

Moroccan students from Casablanca and Fes were asked in focus groups to give some examples of lessons or experiences in the Access Program that had increased their knowledge and understanding of the United States. Their responses included:

- Summer camp—an accelerated program in which students attended class every day;
- Independence Day picnic at the Embassy, where students met the Ambassador and had a U.S.-style barbeque;
- Field trips to the zoo (where they learned the English words for various animals) and a visit to the Pepsi Company bottling plant;
- Enhancement activities such as the Johnette Downing concert (a blues singer from New Orleans who performs a pedagogical concert teaching, among other things, the days of the week, Cajun/U.S. foods, nouns and adjectives); and
- Classroom-based units on the solar system and space discovery.

More than 83 percent of the Moroccan Access students said they had shared their knowledge with others. They teach their younger siblings English and explain the United States to their friends and families. Peers of Access students in Morocco confirmed that they are also benefiting from their friends' lessons: 79 percent of male peers and 46 percent of female peers said their Access friend has taught them something about the United States. When asked to give some examples of the types of things they learned, peers' responses included: "He talks to me about American culture; how to deal with Americans and some of the American values; movies and music; and study programs in the United States." A vast majority (88.5%) of parents also said their child had been taught about U.S. culture through Access.

Some of our [Access] lessons give you an idea about America. I noticed that there is equality between the boys and the girls; for example in the textbook pictures, we have pictures of boys and girls together.

- Focus Group Participant, Morocco

c. Community Awareness of the Access Program

When students in Morocco were asked how well the Access Program is known throughout their community, just over 20 percent of respondents said that Access is known well or very well, whereas nearly 80 percent said Access is not very well known or not known at all throughout their communities. This percentage was low for the region, as 42 percent of Lebanese students and 47 percent of Omani students said the Access Program was well or very well known in their communities. However, peers of Moroccan Access students interviewed for this evaluation were very familiar with the Access Program, with all 25 Moroccan peers expressing familiarity with the Program.

d. Assessment of Democratic Values

When asked to rate their level of understanding and knowledge on U.S. democracy, only about 10 percent of Moroccan Access students rated themselves as having beyond basic or advanced knowledge, around 40 percent said they had basic knowledge, and nearly half said they had less than basic or no knowledge of U.S. democracy. However nearly half (47.3%) of respondents said that the Access Program had made substantial or moderate changes in that understanding.

Participants in Morocco also were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or strongly agreed with statements expressing democratic values. In general, most students agreed or strongly agreed with statements such as citizens should have equal rights and protections under the law (97.1%), voting is important (95.1%), and free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy (92.2%). The lowest finding was 78.4 percent of students who agreed or strongly agreed that an independent media is important to the free flow of information (see Table 3.11).

TABLE 3.11 Access Students' Responses on Statements Expressing Democratic Values Morocco			
	Agree or Strongly Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree or Strongly Disagree (%)
Voting is important because real decisions are made in elections	95.1	3.9	1.0
Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy	92.2	3.9	3.9
An independent media is important to the free flow of information	78.4	13.7	7.9
All citizens in a country should have equal rights and protections under the law	97.1	2.9	0.0
The Rule of Law is fundamental to a functioning democracy	88.3	9.8	2.0
Individuals and organizations have the right to free speech and to voice opposition	83.3	11.8	4.9
Democratic principles enhance the workplace	87.3	9.8	2.9

Total Sample: 102 Access participants

In open-ended survey responses, Moroccan students demonstrated basic understanding of the government and electoral systems of the United States, as well as of freedoms and tolerance. Several also pointedly criticized the U.S. Government for its policies, but they also conceded, "There is a difference between the American people and the government."

2. Lebanon

a. English Communication Skills

When asked to compare their English ability before Access to their current ability, students reported significant improvement in their skills. Whereas only 32 percent of students graded themselves as excellent or good before Access classes, at the time of the evaluation 96 percent of current students and 87 percent of alumni rated themselves as excellent or good. Reading was identified as the skill area where students felt the most comfortable before Access, with 54 percent of students rating their pre-Access ability as excellent or good, and it remained one of the strongest skill sets even after Access. Conversely, although grammar was one of the weaker

subjects, 89 percent of students judged themselves to be excellent or good after attending Access classes (see Table 3.12).

TABLE 3.12				
Access Students Reporting Their English Language Skills as Excellent or Good Lebanon				
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Country (%)
Speaking	Before Access	26.5	24.5	25.3
	Now – Current Students	92.8	87.5	89.2
	Now - Alumni*	95.0	88.2	91.9
Reading	Before Access	47.1	59.2	54.2
	Now – Current Students	92.8	100.0	97.8
	Now - Alumni*	100.0	94.1	97.3
Writing	Before Access	26.5	36.8	32.5
	Now – Current Students	100.0	93.7	95.7
	Now - Alumni*	90.0	82.3	86.5
Grammar	Before Access	26.5	42.9	36.1
	Now – Current Students	92.8	87.5	89.1
	Now - Alumni*	80.0	100.0	89.2
Understanding Spoken English	Before Access	35.3	42.9	39.7
	Now – Current Students	92.9	96.9	95.7
	Now - Alumni*	100.0	94.1	97.3

Total Sample: 14 males and 32 females, for a total of 46 Access participants.

20 males and 17 females, for a total of 37 Alumni.

**Current versus alumni status was self-reported by respondents.*

Students participating in focus groups also rated their language ability as good or very good, and several said they had improved tremendously since the start of their Access classes, especially in writing and listening skills.

Most Lebanese Access students (88%) said they had shared the knowledge they learned in Access with parents, peers or other relatives. However, it is interesting to note that while 40 percent of peer respondents said their friend in the Access Program had shared their knowledge of the United States, only 10 percent of peer respondents said their friend in the Access Program had taught them English. This may be because English is sometimes used in standard classroom settings for technical subjects such as science and math, and thus is more prevalent than in some other Access countries. This theory is further supported by the fact that 45 percent of peers surveyed said they had practiced English with their Access friend.

b. Knowledge of the United States

U.S.-based cultural content was not as prevalent in the Lebanese school curriculum as it was in Morocco, but it was, nonetheless, the most frequently studied topic in regular classes for the Lebanese participant respondents (26.5%). Other topics (U.S. Government, legal system, and economic system) were studied by only a handful of respondents prior to the Access Program (see Table 3.13).

TABLE 3.13 Access Students' Prior Lessons on U.S. in Their Regular School Classes Lebanon			
Topic	Male (%)	Female (%)	Country (%)
U.S. System of Government	8.8	4.1	6.0
U.S. Legal System	5.9	6.1	6.0
U.S. Culture and Values	23.5	28.6	26.5
U.S. Economic System	14.7	16.3	15.7

Total Sample: 83 Access participants

Considering this, it is logical that the students in the Lebanon Access Program reported having less knowledge of U.S. topics than their Moroccan counterparts. Moreover, indeed, students' reported knowledge of U.S. economy, culture, religious and ethnic diversity, and others, was still low. Access students had the most advanced or beyond basic knowledge about U.S. freedom of speech and the press (39.8%), followed by daily life in the United States (37.3%) and U.S. values and culture (24.1%). The outputs are shown in Table 3.14.

TABLE 3.14 Access Participants' and Peers' Knowledge of the United States Lebanon										
Topic	Advanced Knowledge (%)		Beyond Basic Knowledge (%)		Basic Knowledge (%)		Less Than Basic (%)		No Knowledge (%)	
	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer
U.S. democracy	0.0	0.0	4.8	5.0	53.0	35.0	33.7	45.0	8.4	15.0
U.S. economy	--	5.0	10.8	5.0	43.4	40.0	33.7	25.0	12.0	25.0
U.S. values and culture	1.2	--	22.9	10.0	45.8	30.0	28.9	35.0	1.2	25.0
Religious and ethnic diversity	1.2	--	13.3	--	50.6	35.0	28.9	30.0	6.0	35.0
Freedom of speech/Press	13.3	5.0	26.5	10.0	38.6	40.0	20.5	45.0	1.2	--
Voluntary community service	7.2	5.0	13.3	10.0	37.3	15.0	28.9	10.0	13.3	60.0
Daily life in the U.S.	9.6	--	27.7	10.0	34.9	35.0	25.3	30.0	2.4	25.0

Total Sample: 83 Access participants, 20 peers

Lebanese Access students reported a very strong cultural component in their Access classes. Of the 83 students surveyed, 100 percent said they had learned something about the United States

in their Access classes. Likewise, 100 percent of the 20 parents surveyed in Lebanon said their children had learned something about the United States in their Access classes.

When asked how much their understanding of these topics increased due to the Access Program, Lebanese participants showed about the same levels of improvement as did the Moroccan respondents. One area that stands out is their knowledge of voluntary community service. Whereas 45 percent of Moroccan students said their knowledge had increased moderately or substantially due to Access, 73 percent of Lebanese students felt their knowledge had increased at this level (see Table 3.15). This indicates the impact that community service projects had on the Access participants in Lebanon, where these kinds of activities are featured regularly.

TABLE 3.15 Changes in Participants' Understanding and Knowledge of the U.S Due to Access Program Lebanon		
	Moderate to Substantial Change (%)	Minimal to No Change (%)
U.S. values and culture	77.1	22.9
Daily life in the United States	75.9	24.1
Voluntary community service	73.4	26.5
Freedom of speech and the press in the U.S.	57.8	42.1
Religious and Ethnic diversity in the United States	51.2	48.8
U.S. democracy	47.0	53.0
U.S. economy	30.1	69.8

Total Sample: 83 Access participants

Focus group participants, when asked to give examples of lessons or activities that had helped to increase their knowledge of the United States, cited visits from the U.S.-born AMIDEAST and U.S. Embassy staff as the greatest influence in improving their view of Americans. They also said activities such as the Thanksgiving dinner at the Bristol Hotel, and units in their textbook that focused on U.S. cultural and business activities, as being helpful in advancing their knowledge about life in the United States.

All 20 of the parents of Access students interviewed in Lebanon said their children had learned something about U.S. culture or society through their Access Program classes. This was the highest rate of affirmative responses in the NEA region. When parents of Access students were asked to give some examples of things their children had learned about the United States in their Access classes, their responses included:

- “Through cultural activities, freedom of expression, education in U.S., getting to know different people in different communities.”
- “The location in America, the type of education, volunteering in the American society.”
- “About freedom, civil laws ... democracy, everyone gets his right and is punished. The notion of freedom, economic and social laws.”

- "[My child] became very interested in American culture and family life and wants to study in U.S."

c. Community Awareness of the Access Program

When students were asked how well the Access Program is known throughout their community, 42 percent of students said the Program is very well or well known. Peers of Lebanese Access students were familiar with the Program, and 95 percent indicated they would like to participate in the Access Program.

d. Assessment of Democratic Values

When asked to rate their level of understanding and knowledge of U.S. democracy, 53 percent of Lebanese Access students said they had basic understanding of the topic. Less than five percent said they had knowledge at a level they would categorize as advanced or beyond basic, and 42 percent of Lebanese students said they had less than basic or no knowledge of U.S. democracy. However, 47 percent of Lebanese Access students said the Access Program had made moderate or substantial change in their understanding of U.S. democracy.

Participants were also asked to gauge their level of agreement with statements of democratic values (see Table 3.16). Most of the Access students surveyed in Lebanon were in strong agreement with these statements: 100 percent agreed or strongly agreed that free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy; 98.8 percent agreed or strongly agreed that all citizens should have equal rights and protections under the law; 96.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that voting is important; and 95.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed that democratic principles enhance the workplace. Most strikingly, 54 percent of Lebanese respondents strongly agreed that independent media is important to the free flow of information, whereas only 39 percent of Moroccan students strongly agreed with that statement.

TABLE 3.16 Access Students' Responses on Statements Expressing Democratic Values Lebanon			
	Agree or Strongly Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree or Strongly Disagree (%)
Voting is important because real decisions are made in elections	96.4	3.6	0.0
Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy	100.0	0.0	0.0
An independent media is important to the free flow of information	94.0	4.8	1.2
All citizens in a country should have equal rights and protections under the law	98.8	0.0	1.2
The Rule of Law is fundamental to a functioning democracy	94.0	4.8	1.2
Individuals and organizations have the right to free speech and to voice opposition	92.8	7.2	0.0
Democratic principles enhance the workplace	95.2	4.8	0.0

Total Sample: 83 Access participants

3. Oman

a. English Communication Skills

With 80 hours of instruction for each level, the Access Program is designed to take the students through four levels of language proficiency, which school administrators felt would prepare them to interact in a workplace setting or meet the entry requirements to apply for university admission.

We must learn the English language; it's important and we need it for the future when we are going to work. We are going to be asked how much did you score in English. Therefore, we have to learn.

- Focus Group Participant, Oman

Students were asked to assess their English language ability before the Access Program as compared to their current ability. Overall, a large number of students reported improvement in their skills, especially in speaking and grammar categories. A breakdown of the responses by gender reveals that, in almost every case, the female Access students in Oman rated their abilities more highly than did the male Access students (see Table 3.17).

TABLE 3.17 Access Students Reporting Their English Language Skills as Excellent or Good Oman				
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Country (%)
Speaking	Before Access	9.5	20.4	15.1
	Now – Current Students	70.3	75.6	73.1
	Now - Alumni*	60.0	100.0	75.0
Reading	Before Access	33.3	50.0	41.9
	Now – Current Students	70.2	85.3	78.2
	Now - Alumni*	100.0	100.0	100.0
Writing	Before Access	23.8	29.5	26.8
	Now – Current Students	59.4	70.7	65.4
	Now - Alumni*	100.0	100.0	100.0
Grammar	Before Access	9.5	27.3	18.6
	Now – Current Students	51.3	78.0	65.4
	Now - Alumni*	80.0	66.7	75.0
Understanding Spoken English	Before Access	23.8	45.4	34.8
	Now – Current Students	62.1	75.6	69.2
	Now - Alumni*	60.0	100.0	75.0

Total Sample: 37 males and 41 females, for a total of 78 Access participants.

5 males and 3 females, for a total of 8 Alumni.

*Current versus alumni status was self-reported by respondents.

In a group discussion, Access students in Oman felt that their rate of progression was good, although most of the students had been in class for just a few months. Because the classes meet on an accelerated schedule, progress is quick. Students comments regarding progress included: “I learned some words and some grammar, and most important my speaking [improved];” and “My English language skills have improved, it now means I can speak a little and read.”

Some 83 percent of the participant respondents in Oman said they shared what they learned in the Access Program with their family and friends. They said they shared vocabulary and grammar; they also practice speaking and understanding English. One respondent said, “I try to give a better image about the United States.” Of the four peers who had a friend in Access, three said their Access friend had taught them something about the English language, and one peer said he practiced English with his Access friend. When asked to give examples of the types of things their Access friend had taught them, peers said they had learned English conversation, grammar, and writing.

b. Knowledge of the United States

U.S. cultural content in the Access Program in Oman is not as extensive as in the other countries in the NEA region. Only 20 percent of the respondents said they had learned something about the United States in their Access classes. In focus groups, students said they learned about the

Revolutionary War, computer programs, state and federal government systems, and the U.S. university system. When asked to give some examples of Access lessons that had increased their knowledge of the United States, one student cited a U.S. geography lesson. Students also gave the following examples in their survey responses: “American customs and traditions,” “Pop music and jazz,” “The casual language used in the U.S.,” and “They have good public schools.”

Parents in Oman were asked whether they felt their children had learned something about U.S. culture or society from the Access Program. Six of the nine parents surveyed said their children had learned about the United States, including: “He became more able to understand a lot about the United States through books and newspapers,” and “She knows more about the American people and culture.” When peers in Oman were asked if their Access friends had taught them anything about the United States, none of the four peers with friends in Access said they had discussed the subject.

c. Community Awareness of Access Program

Access participants in Oman were asked to categorize how well Access is known throughout their community. Some 46 percent of students said it is well or very well known. Several students, when asked where they heard about the Access Program, said they heard about it from local media and daily newspaper advertisements. Other sources of information about Access were the Ministry of Education or Ministry of Manpower representatives, family members, and faculty and staff of the local public schools.

d. Assessment of Democratic Values

At the Ministry of Education’s request, the ECA indicator questions were not asked in Oman, so students did not give their opinions on democracy (see Appendix A for a list of omitted questions). However, students were asked to identify things they learned about U.S. values and government through their Access classes. Examples of their responses included:

- “We have studied a little bit about U.S. values in general.”
- “They respect personal freedom.”
- “They vote every four years to choose the new ruler.”
- “I admire the concept of voting.”
- “They have a republican system, and they vote every four years.”

C. Overall Assessment of the Program – South and Central Asian Affairs Region

Overall, the stakeholders in the Access Program in the South and Central Asia countries of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan reported high satisfaction with the Access Program. The PAS staff and the RELO believed that the programs in the South and Central Asia countries visited for this study were performing effectively. Administrators of the in-country educational service providers were also quite satisfied with the Program overall.

1. Satisfaction with the Program

The Access students across all three SCA countries reported being satisfied with various components of the Program (see Table 3.18). As mentioned earlier, the Access Program was newest in Ahmedabad and one-quarter to one-third of the participants replied that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, likely because they had only recently begun their Access classes. These outstanding results illustrate that Access students are very positive about their Access experiences and that the Program is meeting their expectations.

TABLE 3.18						
Access Students' Satisfaction with Program Components – Agree or Strongly Agree						
SCA Region						
	Bangladesh	India			Pakistan	SCA Region (%)
	Dhaka (%)	New Delhi (%)	Chennai (%)	Ahmedabad (%)	Lahore (%)	
Administration	90.9	98.0	94.0	65.0	92.3	90.0
Content	94.6	90.0	95.5	67.5	93.1	90.4
Variety of Experience	94.6	98.0	97.0	52.5	95.3	91.0
Relevance for Development	94.6	94.0	95.5	65.0	96.9	92.1
Total Sample (n)	55	50	67	40	130	342

Most Access students felt that the length of their Access classes was about right (67.3%) in terms of number of hours, and they felt the length of the Access Program was about right (76.0%) in terms of months of instruction. Most of the rest felt their classes were too short (22.8%) and that the Access Program was too short (20.2%). Few participants felt that their class periods were too long (9.9%), and very few felt that the Access Program was too long overall (3.8%).

Data from Access peer surveys also indicate that the Access Program is perceived as useful and desirable among the intended audience for the Program. The vast majority of the peer respondents (86% in India and 90% in Pakistan) said they would like to participate in the classes themselves (see Table 3.19).

TABLE 3.19 Peer Interest in Participating in Access Classes SCA Region*						
	India		Pakistan		SCA Region	
	Yes (%)	Total Sample (n)	Yes (%)	Total Sample (n)	Yes (%)	Total Sample (n)
Male	81.5	27	90.9	22	85.7	49
Female	90.5	21	90.0	10	90.3	31
Overall	85.7	48	90.6	32	87.5	80

*Peers were not interviewed in Bangladesh.

Furthermore, the parents of Access students resoundingly endorse the Access Program. When asked if they would encourage their other children to participate in the Access Program, 92 percent of parents in India and 97 percent of parents in Pakistan said they would encourage their other children to participate.⁸

My friend is studying in an English medium school and she wanted to join this [Access] Program, and I asked her why she wanted to join this Program because her school is English medium and it teaches English. She said that 'no' they teach us in Urdu, and they don't teach us the way your teacher and your Program does. So my [Access] school is doing a good thing and without this Program I would have never been able to speak properly and learn.

- Focus Group Participant, Pakistan

2. Short Term Outcomes

a. Improved English Language

The evaluators heard from every stakeholder group that Access students have made great strides in their acquisition of English. As 94.7 percent of students in the SCA region joined Access primarily to learn English, this is an important accomplishment. Measurement of this progress is not standardized across the region, but participants report with great pride and confidence that they have improved their English skills and want to make even greater advancement. Parents see progress in their children's English skills and are pleased to see that the skills are shared with siblings and others in the family. Among 81 parents of SCA Access students surveyed, 87.6 percent report that their own knowledge of English has increased (16.0% very much, 39.5% a great deal, and 32.1% some). Program administrators and teachers point with gratification at the achievements of their students. Public Affairs Officers, Cultural Affairs Officers, and RELOs maintain that the Program has improved the language skills of the participants.

The vast majority of students, 94.4 percent, feel that the Access Program has helped them with regular school subjects (92.6% of boys and 96.7% of girls), in addition to improving their English skills. They reported having better writing and speaking skills, increased confidence, and an easier time understanding other subjects. Furthermore, over 92 percent of parents interviewed thought that their children's participation in Access benefited their other children by teaching them or helping them with their studies in English and other subjects. Parents also thought that their

⁸ Parents in Bangladesh were not interviewed at the request of the U.S. Embassy (Dhaka).

families benefited from their children's participation in the Program, either through increased family prestige (38.7%), improved financial prospects (22.6%), access to newspapers and other media for the family (11.6%), and recognition from extended family members (11.6%).

Many of the students the evaluation team met wished to continue their English studies after the Access Program. More than half of the administrators and teachers said there were English language providers in the area whose services the students could purchase, but the fees were frequently well out of reach of the disadvantaged population. Most feel that the Access students will certainly be able to use English in their regular classes and in higher education if they are able to attend university or technical school.

b. Positive Attitudes towards the United States

In addition to learning English, the Access participants have learned about the United States, as reported in Chapter 2. Since most reported learning something new about the United States through the Access Program, participants and their peers were asked to rate how favorably or unfavorably they now view the U.S. Government (see Table 3.20).

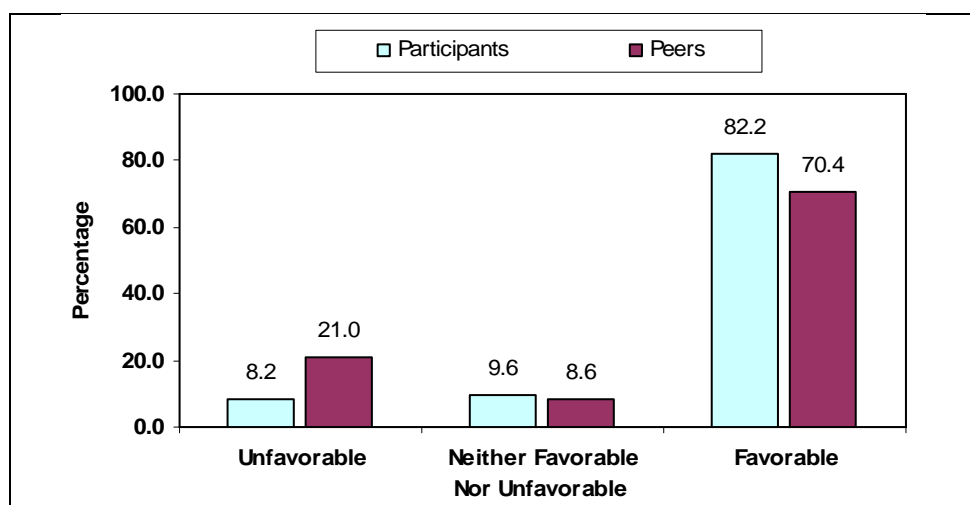
TABLE 3.20 Participants' and Peers' Views of the United States Government SCA Region					
	Strongly Favorable (%)	Generally Favorable (%)	Neither Favorable nor Unfavorable (%)	Generally Unfavorable (%)	Strongly Unfavorable (%)
Participants	20.8	51.8	13.7	9.6	4.1
Peers	8.6	46.9	8.6	21.0	14.8

Total Sample: 342 Access participants, 81 peers.

More than 70 percent of Access participants in the SCA region viewed the U.S. Government generally favorably or strongly favorably. Some 13.7 percent of respondents took a neutral position, and an identical percentage took a generally or strongly unfavorable view. Their peers were less positive; 55.5 percent viewed the U.S. Government favorably, and 35.8 percent viewed it unfavorably.

The SCA Access participants viewed the American people positively—82.2 percent were generally or strongly favorable (shown in Figure 3.3). The majority of the peers of the Access participants were also favorably disposed toward the American people (though fewer than in the NEA region). Concerning their views of the American people, 70.4 percent of the SCA peer respondents were either strongly favorable or generally favorable.

FIGURE 3.3
Participants' and Peers' Views of the American People
SCA Region



Total Sample: 342 Access participants, 81 peers.

In addition to reporting their views, the students were asked to share the extent to which those perceptions had changes due to the Access Program. Table 3.21 illustrates the magnitude of the impact on the students in the SCA region, with 78.7 percent reporting that they view the U.S. Government more favorably and 84.5 percent reporting that they view the American people more favorably because of their participation in the Access Program.

Table 3.21 Change in Views of U.S. Government and American People SCA Region					
	Much More Favorable (%)	More Favorable (%)	No Change (%)	Less Favorable (%)	Much Less Favorable (%)
U.S. Government	36.4	42.3	10.0	7.9	3.3
American people	47.7	36.8	7.9	5.0	2.5

Total Sample: 239 Access participants.

c. Positive Changes in Student Aspirations and Self-Confidence

Access participants were asked to rate themselves on a variety of measures related to self-confidence, as were their peers who were interviewed for the evaluation (see Table 3.22). SCA Access participants assessed their leadership skills and abilities ranging from a high of 90.3 percent good or excellent rating on listening to other people's suggestions or concerns, to 82.2 percent on public speaking. More participants also rated themselves as good or excellent (81.5%) in contrast to their peers (65.4%) on the issue of being self-reliant and independent; on listening to other people's concerns and suggestions (90.3% and 82.7%, respectively) and on being tolerant of those different than oneself (86.6% and 74.1%, respectively).

TABLE 3.22
Comparison of Measures of Self-Confidence between Access Students and Peers
SCA Region

	Excellent (%)		Good (%)		Fair (%)		Poor (%)	
	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer
Being self-reliant, being independent, relying on yourself	32.7	18.5	48.8	46.9	10.5	23.5	7.9	11.1
Speaking in public	38.0	37.0	44.2	44.4	14.6	16.0	3.2	2.5
Listening to other people's suggestions or concerns	41.2	42.0	49.1	40.7	8.2	16.0	1.5	1.2
Expressing ideas and feelings	29.9	34.6	44.3	44.4	21.0	18.5	4.8	2.5
Being tolerant of others different than you	42.7	35.8	43.9	38.3	11.1	18.5	2.3	7.4
Discussing your beliefs/values	37.1	37.0	49.7	50.6	10.2	8.6	2.9	3.7

Total Sample: 342 Access participants, 81 peers.

On two characteristics, when good and excellent ratings are combined, female participants report a higher rating than male participants: self-reliance (87.5% and 76.8%, respectively) and being flexible (88.8% and 81.6%, respectively). Using the same scale, male participants rated themselves higher than female participants in listening to others (93.1% and 86.9%, respectively); expressing ideas and feelings (87.9% and 84.9%, respectively); and tolerance (88.9% and 84.2%, respectively). Among the peers, males tended to rate themselves more highly in public speaking, listening to others, expressing ideas, tolerance and discussing values than females.

Half of the SCA Access teacher respondents (50.0%) reported that participants gained confidence through the Access Program, increased their level of self-motivation and learned to take initiative. One teacher in Bangladesh noted that one Access student was accepted to the English Department at Dhaka University. In both Pakistan and Bangladesh, the evaluation team heard that Access students were scoring at the tops of their regular classes in English literature and winning speech, debate, and other contests. None of the teachers reported any negative impact the Program has had on the students.

[I was speaking] with my cousin who came from America and she can speak in very good English. And others were getting jealous, asking why are you talking in English? You should speak in Urdu, we all are sitting around you. And so I say that I am trying to learn American English, and she is American so we should talk in that language. So this Program does not only teach us English but also gives us confidence. How can we move in the society without confidence?

- Focus Group Participant, Pakistan

The quote above illustrates the degree to which the students realize they are more self-confident, and they are not the only ones to notice. In New Delhi for example, the Access Program administrator and the teachers have noticed a vast improvement in behavior in those students who are in the Access Program. They have become quite self-confident and accustomed to visitors from the American Center. The Program, they report, has opened up the way the students think

about their lives and their opportunities. They have been able to discuss different cultures and ideas, and it has changed their attitudes. The administrator in India believed that the parents change as well—their stature improves as their children's prospects improve. The parents also remarked on the improvements that their children have been able to make because of the Program.

d. Positive Attention in the Media

The Access Program receives limited attention from the media in the SCA region, mostly around the beginning of the Program when the U.S. Ambassador presents the scholarship awards to the students. Although none of the programs had held official graduation ceremonies at the time of the site visits, it is not unreasonable to assume that the media might again cover the certificate awarding ceremony that also involves the Ambassador. There has been no regular coverage of the Program, however, in any of the SCA countries included in the evaluation. One Program administrator, reacting to questions about media attention to the Program, preferred the media “the farther away the better.” According to some respondents, publicity brings as much criticism of the Program by some as praise by others.

e. Synergy Among Programs

One of the major successes of the Access Program in New Delhi was the selection of two of their Access students for the YES Program. These students excelled in the Access Program and will come to the United States to live with an American family for a year and attend a U.S. high school after they finish the Access Program. Similar results will be possible across the South and Central Asia region as most programs are being designed so students will complete the Access Program by the end of Grade 10.

The programs in two SCA countries are focused on leveraging resources across programs to enhance the effectiveness of each. In Ahmedabad, India, and Bangladesh, the American Centers had planned to have English Language Fellows use part of their time to support the Access Program. Much of this support will take the form of training for the English teachers, but they may also serve as classroom resources for the students who might otherwise not have the opportunity to interact with Americans regularly.

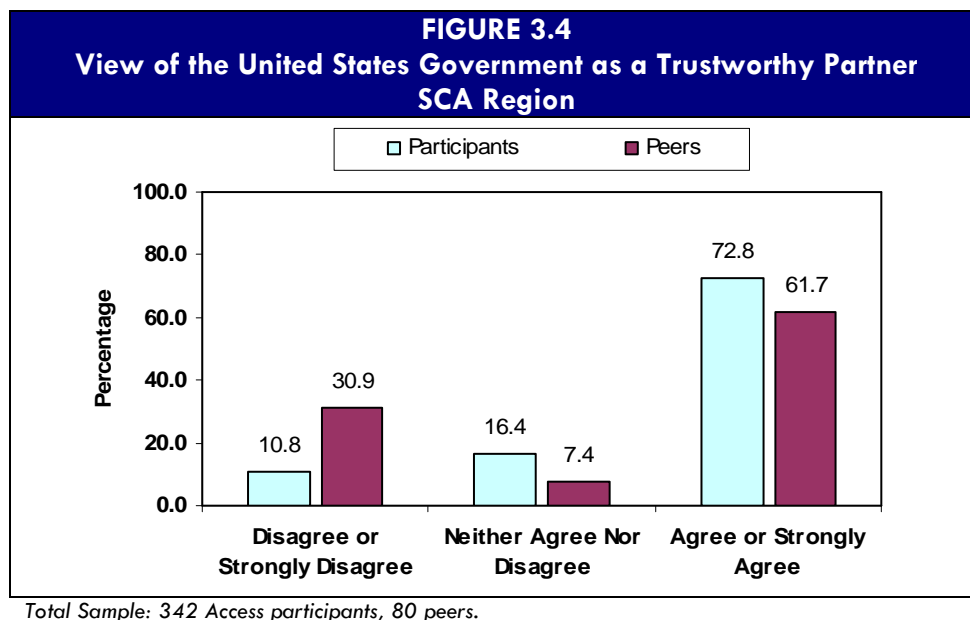
3. Long Term Outcomes

a. Enhanced Mutual Understanding

The Access students reported that their knowledge of the United States increased because of their participation, and in the SCA region, they reported more knowledge of the United States than their non-Access peers. For example, focus group participants in Chennai reported that they came to know about the people of the United States, their culture, their habits, the meaning of their flag, national festivals, domestic festivals, food varieties, and about religions in the United States.

In addition to what they learned, students were asked to evaluate, in their view, whether the U.S. Government is a trustworthy partner for their countries (see Figure 3.4). Most students (72.8%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, and only 10.8 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. The peers answered somewhat differently, with only 61.7 percent agreeing that the

United States is a trustworthy partner and 30.9 percent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Fewer Access students disagreed and more remained neutral than among the peers.



The SCA peers were also more likely to have an opinion than their counterparts in the NEA region, with 61.7 percent of SCA peers agreeing and 53.3 percent of NEA peers. Some 30.9 percent of SCA peers disagreed while only 20.0 percent of those in NEA disagreed.

They told us about democracy; before this, we only knew about the Pakistani culture but now we know about Americans and other than American language, we know about their culture.

- Focus Group Participant, Pakistan

Parental data from India and Pakistan show that 55.6 percent of the 81 respondents believe that their children have gained a greater understanding of U.S. culture through the Access Program. Most of the gains reported appeared in the areas of: knowledge of the U.S. culture, the friendliness of the American people, and the technological advancements of the United States.

b. Increased Leadership Roles

One of the longer-term impacts of programs like the Access Program is in its creation of opportunities for students to learn leadership skills and to begin to use them with their families, peers and others in the community. Although the full impact of the Access Program in terms of developing those leadership skills will not be known for several years, students were asked to assess their own leadership skills at this point in time. The peers were also asked to assess their leadership skills, and the results are compared in Table 3.23.

The Access participants rated themselves more highly than their peers in each category, with three categories showing similar differences between participants and peers who responded either good or excellent: a) leading a team and motivating others (86.6% and 80.2%, respectively); b) being flexible (84.8% and 77.8%, respectively); and c) willing to make changes in your

community (88.0% and 81.5%, respectively). The biggest difference between the groups was in solving problems, in which 92.1 percent of participants rated themselves good or excellent, contrasted with 82.7 percent of peers. Planning for the future was the category in which the greatest number of participants and peers rated themselves as good or excellent and produced the least difference between the two (93.6% and 88.9%, respectively).

TABLE 3.23 Comparison of Measures of Leadership Skills between Access Students and Peers SCA Region								
Skills	Excellent (%)		Good (%)		Fair (%)		Poor (%)	
	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer
Leading a team and motivating others	43.9	33.3	42.7	46.9	10.8	13.6	2.6	6.2
Being flexible	34.2	39.5	50.6	38.3	12.6	13.6	2.6	8.6
Solving problems	46.5	44.4	45.6	38.3	7.6	14.8	0.3	2.5
Planning for the future	53.8	50.6	39.8	38.3	5.8	11.1	0.6	0.0
Willing to make changes in your community	48.5	39.5	39.5	42.0	8.5	8.6	3.5	9.9

Total Sample: 342 Access participants, 81 peers.

There were some differences by gender, with male participants rating themselves more highly than female participants on leading a team (90.0% and 82.2%, respectively) and solving problems (94.8% and 88.9%, respectively). By contrast, among the peers, females rated themselves more highly than males in ability to lead a team and motivate others, while males rated themselves more highly in flexibility and problem-solving.

The parents corroborated what the students reported. Parents said their children have shown improvement in their studies (45.3%), improvement in communication skills (34.7%), and overall behavioral change (9.3%). In addition, another four percent said that the students' self esteem was higher because of participating in the Program.

In focus groups, Access participants express great expectations for the future: higher education; taking the IELTS or TOEFL test; completing a Masters Degree program; or looking for scholarship opportunities. One participant said, "There is more chance of getting a job in good companies after this course; it will help me to communicate with others." The students were interested in a wide range of fields including teaching, engineering, economics, architecture, writing, catering, marketing, and the military. As noted above, the teachers also observed an increase in the Access students' self-confidence and motivation. They thought the Access students had better leadership qualities as they were nearing the end of the Program. Access focus group participants in India talked about becoming engineers, astronomers, doctors, and "anything to help humanity."

Before this Access Program, we did not have any interest about the American culture. We used to think that the Americans are not good. After joining this Program from the books or reading materials we received, and the seminars we attended, now we know that the Americans are like us.

- Focus Group Participant, Bangladesh

c. Improved Employability

Many Access teachers (42.9%) thought the most significant benefit to the students is that they have learned English and can access the opportunities that this skill opens to them. The teachers believed that the Access classes would help students communicate effectively, be more competitive for jobs or university admission, and perhaps be able to teach English in the future.

A high percentage of students (72.8%) also said that the Access Program has affected other areas of their lives. They cite higher expectations for the job market, increased chances to enter a university, opportunities to teach their siblings and relatives English, and the ability to share English language media with their families.

In addition to asking Access participants and teachers how they thought the students were benefiting from the Program, the evaluation team interviewed the students' parents to determine what benefits they thought their children would gain through the program. The most frequent response was getting a good job (22.6%), followed by communicating well (19.4%), having a good future (17.7%), and being useful in work/career (14.5%).

A sales clerk in Ahmedabad makes about 1,000 INR per month. A clerk working at call center or medical transcription center who speaks English well earns 20,000 INR per month.

- Program administrator, India

d. Benefits to In-country Educational Service Providers

As the Access Program is still very new, it is difficult to know what the long-term benefits to the in-country educational service providers will be. SCA Access teachers noted that the image of the schools and centers hosting the Access Program is improving (44.4%), and that the centers have a positive image in their community (33.3%). The Program administrators also noted some improved standing in the community, but tempered that with concern that, particularly in the first year of the Program, many in the community were suspicious of the Program and the U.S. Embassy's reasons for funding it. Several of the in-country educational service providers said they had to work diligently to ensure that their reputations in the community they served were not affected by their participation in the Access Program. In the case of Bangladesh, the in-country educational service provider also had to provide its own financial resources to address the concerns of the schools from which the Access students were coming, which meant they had to make cuts in other programs to accommodate the Access Program (see Chapter 2, Section D for examples).

D. SCA Outcomes by Country

1. Bangladesh

a. English Communication Skills

Access students reported making significant strides in their English language abilities because of their participation in the Program. The most dramatic improvements for the students in Dhaka are in their speaking ability and understanding spoken English, as reported in Table 3.24 below. Whereas before the Access Program only four percent of boys and three percent of girls reported having good or excellent English speaking skills, because of the Program the same boy and girl students reported having over 70 percent increases in speaking ability (73.9% and 75.0%, respectively). The girls reported their skills were slightly better than the boys in grammar both before (18.7% versus 13.0%) and now (59.4% versus 56.5%), but the boys reported their reading skills (95.6%) were better than the girls reported theirs to be (81.3%).

TABLE 3.24 Access Students Reporting Their English Language Skills as Excellent or Good Bangladesh				
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Country (%)
Speaking	Before Access	4.3	3.1	3.6
	Now – Current Students	73.9	75.0	74.5
Reading	Before Access	43.5	40.6	41.8
	Now – Current Students	95.6	81.3	87.3
Writing	Before Access	39.1	40.5	38.2
	Now – Current Students	82.6	75.0	78.2
Grammar	Before Access	13.0	18.7	16.3
	Now – Current Students	56.5	59.4	58.2
Understanding Spoken English	Before Access	21.7	18.8	20.0
	Now – Current Students	73.9	81.3	78.2

Total Sample: 55 Access participants

Students also reported that they shared what they learned in their Access classes with friends, parents and relatives. Almost all of the girls (96.9%) and a majority of the boys (78.3%) said that they had shared what they learned with others, primarily through discussions or teaching them about English.

b. Knowledge of the United States

According to the PAS staff in the U.S. Embassy, the Access students have a better understanding of U.S. culture because of participating in the Access Program. A small number of the students reported having had some lessons about the United States at some time in their regular school

curricula (see Table 3.25). In addition, 63.6 percent of the Bangladeshi Access students said that they had learned something about the United States through the Program.

TABLE 3.25 Access Students' Prior Lessons on U.S. in Their Regular School Classes Bangladesh			
Topic	Male (%)	Female (%)	Country (%)
U.S. System of Government	26.1	18.8	21.6
U.S. Legal System	30.4	21.9	25.5
U.S. Culture and Values	21.7	25.0	23.6
U.S. Economic System	26.1	34.4	30.9

Total Sample: 55 Access participants

In spite of the fact that some students said they were exposed to the U.S. Government system, legal system, culture or economy, very few thought they had a strong understanding of the United States (see Table 3.26). Around half of the students (54.5%) said they had no knowledge of the various facets of U.S. life in spite of having participated in the Program and spending about five percent of class time on U.S. culture. More students said they were familiar with the religious and ethnic diversity in the United States than with U.S. culture, economy or democracy.

TABLE 3.26 Access Participants' Knowledge of the United States Bangladesh					
	Advanced Knowledge (%)	Beyond Basic Knowledge (%)	Basic Knowledge (%)	Less Than Basic (%)	No Knowledge (%)
U.S. democracy	0.0	7.3	29.1	10.9	52.7
U.S. economy	3.6	10.9	18.2	9.1	58.2
U.S. values and culture	5.5	12.7	20.0	9.1	52.7
Religious and ethnic diversity	7.3	14.5	23.6	12.7	41.8
Freedom of speech/Press	7.3	10.9	16.4	9.1	56.4
Voluntary community service	9.1	7.3	16.4	18.2	49.1
Daily life in the U.S.	9.1	9.1	25.5	1.8	54.5

Total Sample: 55 Access participants. Peers were not interviewed in Bangladesh.

In addition to gauging their understanding and knowledge of the United States, those students who reported that they had learned something about the United States through the Access Program were asked to what degree their understanding or knowledge had been affected by their participation in the Access Program. Table 3.27 illustrates the extent of those changes. As in the NEA region, most Bangladeshi students reported moderate to substantial change in their knowledge of daily life in the United States (62.9%), followed by religious and ethnic diversity in the United States (51.5%) and voluntary community service (51.4%). Only 28.6 percent of

students reported increasing their knowledge in freedom of speech and the press in the United States.

TABLE 3.27		
Changes in Participants' Understanding and Knowledge of the U.S Due to Access Program Bangladesh		
	Moderate to Substantial Change (%)	Minimal to No Change (%)
Daily life in the United States	62.9	37.1
Religious and ethnic diversity in the United States	51.5	48.5
Voluntary community service	51.4	48.6
U.S. values and culture	48.6	51.4
U.S. economy	37.2	62.8
U.S. democracy	37.2	62.8
Freedom of speech and the press in the U.S.	28.6	71.4

Total Sample: 35 Access participants

Focus group discussions also revealed that the students felt they had learned about the United States. One Bangladesh Access student noted, "One of the things that very much impressed me about U.S. strategy was that they have got two political parties, Democratic and Republican, and their office is in the same building."

c. Community Awareness of Access Program

The Access Program is not known widely throughout Dhaka, but it is known among those who would consider themselves devout Muslims. The madrassa principals in Dhaka are all aware of the Access Program and have been monitoring its progress. One of the teachers reported that he had contact with community members other than parents regarding the Access Program. New contacts among the madrassa community have been recruited by leveraging the LPC Arabic teachers' contacts throughout the devout Muslim community in Dhaka.

The students in Bangladesh were less positive about the Program being well-known than the teachers. Around half, 45.3 percent of boys and 52.0 percent of girls, reported that it is well-known or very well-known, while the remainder said it was not.

Parents have reported being involved in various Access activities. Several parents have served on an advisory committee for the Program at the Language Proficiency Center. The teachers in Bangladesh confirmed that parents have been involved in events at the LPC and in their visits to the American Center in Dhaka as well.

d. Assessment of Democratic Values

One of the longer-term goals of the Access Program is to engender the appreciation of democratic values among Access participants. Almost two-thirds of the Access students in Bangladesh (56.5% of boys and 71.9% of girls) reported that they have had lessons on

democracy and civics as a part of their regular school curricula, and thus were exposed to democratic values prior to their participation in the Access Program.

Access students were also asked the extent to which Dhaka Access students agreed with positive statements about democratic values (see Table 3.28). Overall, the responses were very positive among the Bangladeshi students. One hundred percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that all citizens in a country should have equal rights and protections under the law. The next highest responses were that individuals and organizations should have the right to practice freedom of speech and to voice opposition (98.1%) and that the rule of law is fundamental to a functioning democracy (96.4%).

TABLE 3.28 Access Students' Responses on Statements Expressing Democratic Values Bangladesh			
	Agree or Strongly Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree or Strongly Disagree (%)
Voting is important because real decisions are made in elections	96.3	1.8	0.0
Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy	96.3	3.6	0.0
An independent media is important to the free flow of information	92.7	7.3	0.0
All citizens in a country should have equal rights and protections under the law	100.0	0.0	0.0
The Rule of Law is fundamental to a functioning democracy	96.4	3.6	0.0
Individuals and organizations have the right to free speech and to voice opposition	98.1	1.8	0.0
Democratic principles enhance the workplace	89.1	9.1	1.8

Total Sample: 55 Access participants

The Bangladeshi Access students agreed in supporting various democratic values, particularly equal protection for all under the law and the right to free speech.

2. India

a. English Communication Skills

The Access students in India have reported vast improvements in their English skills, particularly in speaking and grammar, because of the Access Program. Table 3.29 below shows the self-reported improvements the student felt they had made through the course of the Program. In the initial rankings, girls in India rated their skills more highly than the boys, but both male and female students reported marked increases in their abilities.

TABLE 3.29 Access Students Reporting Their English Language Skills as Excellent or Good India				
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Country (%)
Speaking	Before Access	6.5	18.5	11.5
	Now – Current Students	91.3	89.2	90.5
Reading	Before Access	45.6	53.9	49.1
	Now – Current Students	95.6	90.7	93.6
Writing	Before Access	38.1	47.7	42.0
	Now – Current Students	95.4	90.7	93.6
Grammar	Before Access	19.6	26.1	22.2
	Now – Current Students	79.4	84.6	81.6
Understanding Spoken English	Before Access	25.0	47.7	34.4
	Now – Current Students	82.6	89.2	85.3

Total Sample: 157 Access participants

Among Access participants in India, 97.5 percent reported sharing the English they have learned with their families and friends. The peers reported that they had done so, with more of the boys reporting their friends had taught them something about English than the girls. Fifty-two percent of male peers in India said their friends in Access taught them something about English, compared to only 14 percent of female peers. Of those peers who said they had been taught something, most (42.1%) said it was English speaking, writing, reading or grammar. The second most popular response was reading English books (21.2%). Fewer than half of the peers (44.9%) reported practicing English with their friends in the Access Program.

In addition to what the Access participants said they shared with others, most parents reported that their knowledge of English had increased since their children began participating in the Access Program. Two-thirds of parents in India said that their English had increased “very much” or “a great deal,” whereas only two percent said that their knowledge of English had not changed at all.

b. Knowledge of the United States

According to the PAS staff in the American Center and U.S. Consulates, the Access students have a better understanding of U.S. culture because of participating in the Access Program. More than half of the students in India, however, have had some lessons on the United States at some time in their standard curricula (see Table 3.30). These results are significantly at variance with the Access students in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Despite this prior exposure to the United States,

52.9 percent of students in India reported that they had learned something about the United States through the Access Program.

TABLE 3.30 Percentage of Access Students with Prior Lessons about the United States India			
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Country (%)
U.S. System of Government	60.9	53.8	58.0
U.S. Legal System	57.6	52.3	55.4
U.S. Culture and Values	62.0	55.4	59.2
U.S. Economic System	59.8	52.3	56.7

Total Sample: 157 Access participants

In spite of the relatively high number of students reporting that they had studied some aspect of the United States in their regular classes, more than 35 percent of respondents said they knew nothing of U.S. democracy, culture, economy, or daily life in the United States (see Table 3.31). For the same topics, around 30 percent said they had basic knowledge and a few reported they had beyond basic or advanced knowledge. However, the Access students did rate their knowledge as more advanced than their peers.

TABLE 3.31
Percentage of Participant and Peer Understanding and Knowledge of the United States
India

	Advanced Knowledge (%)		Beyond Basic Knowledge (%)		Basic Knowledge (%)		Less Than Basic (%)		No Knowledge (%)	
	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer
U.S. democracy	0.6	4.1	3.2	14.3	29.9	10.2	26.8	8.2	39.5	63.3
U.S. economy	2.5	0.0	3.8	16.3	28.7	12.2	18.5	10.2	46.5	61.2
U.S. values and culture	3.2	4.1	8.9	10.2	28.7	14.3	20.4	16.3	38.9	55.1
Religious and ethnic diversity.	3.2	2.0	9.6	12.2	26.8	18.4	25.5	12.2	35.0	55.1
Freedom of speech/Press	3.8	8.2	8.3	8.2	31.8	10.2	14.6	8.2	41.4	65.3
Voluntary community service	3.2	0.0	5.7	16.3	25.5	12.2	16.6	14.3	49.0	57.1
Daily life in the U.S.	5.7	4.1	8.9	18.4	33.8	16.3	16.6	6.1	35.5	55.1

Total Sample: 157 Access participants, 49 peers

In addition to reporting their knowledge and understanding of the United States, the Access students were asked to gauge the change in their impressions because of the Access Program (see Table 3.32). Only students who said they had learned something about the United States responded to the question.

TABLE 3.32
Changes in Participants' Understanding and Knowledge of the U.S Due to Access Program
India

	Moderate to Substantial Change (%)	Minimal to No Change (%)
Daily life in the United States	54.2	45.8
Religious and ethnic diversity in the United States	45.7	54.2
U.S. economy	43.3	56.6
U.S. values and culture	42.1	57.9
Voluntary community service	40.9	59.0
Freedom of speech and the press in the U.S.	39.7	60.2
U.S. democracy	37.3	62.7

Total Sample: 83 Access participants

Half of the parents also thought that their children had learned about U.S. culture or society through the Access Program. When asked to cite examples, the responses were varied, with one-quarter of them saying that they learned Americans are friendly, another quarter saying U.S. culture in general, and a few more citing advanced technology and the United States as a developed country.

In a smaller number of cases, the Access participants shared information about the United States with their peers. About 22 percent of peers in India stated that their Access friends had taught them something about the United States.

c. Community Awareness of Access Program

The Access Program is not necessarily well known throughout the communities in which it operates in India. In New Delhi, the in-country educational service provider has been somewhat reticent to advertise the Program to the wider community outside of the school. The teachers reported having no contact with anyone in the community about this Program aside from parents, but they felt it was relatively well known. In Chennai, the school's board is comprised of prominent members of the Muslim community, and they are all quite aware of the Program and reported that they discuss the Program with their friends and contacts outside the school community. The teachers thought the Program was well known among the Muslim population in the city. In Ahmedabad, the Program is known in the community, but not widely. Three teachers reported having discussed the Access Program with social contacts who were not related to the Program. Two of them thought it was very well known, and the others thought it was not well known at all, but defined the "community" as those who did not necessarily have a stake in the Program.

The students in India were split about evenly as to whether the Program was well known in the community. Almost half, 47.8 percent of the boys and 47.7 percent of the girls reported that the Program is not well known, while 52.2 percent of boys and 52.3 percent of girls said it was.

All of the peers interviewed in India knew about the Access Program and knew someone in the Access Program. When asked what they thought their friends were learning in the Access Program, the peers reported four categories of answers: 1) speaking, reading and writing English (75.6%); 2) English and U.S. lifestyles (14.6%); 3) English and general knowledge (4.9%); and 4) English and computers (4.9%).

Parent participation in Access activities was considerable except in Chennai, where the children are in a boarding school. In New Delhi and Ahmedabad, over 85 percent of parents said they had been involved in school or community activities related to the Access Program, which was significantly higher than any of the other SCA countries. The majority of these (78.0%) said they had participated in an event at the school or center sponsored by the Access Program. Five parents said they had observed Access classes. Some parents serve on an advisory committee for the Program, and these were likely the same parents who have also been involved in student selection. A few parents also reported participating in U.S. Embassy/U.S. Consulate events through the Access Program.

d. Assessment of Democratic Values

Only 30 percent of the students in India (34.8% of boys and 23.1% of girls) reported that they have had lessons on democracy and civics as a part of their regular school curricula. As the world's largest democracy, however, India has democratic institutions that are an integral part of society and form part of the students' social knowledge. In asking Access students and peers to assess their attitudes towards various democratic values, they revealed strong support for democratic principles (see Table 3.33), with Access students providing slightly stronger responses in support of democratic values than their peers. The most strongly supported value by both

Access participants and their peers was for all citizens having equal rights and protections under the law.

TABLE 3.33 Access Participants' and Peers' Responses on Statements Expressing Democratic Values India						
	Strongly Agree or Agree (%)		Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)		Strongly Disagree or Disagree (%)	
	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer
Voting is important because real decisions are made in elections	88.5	75.5	4.5	4.1	7.0	20.4
Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy	80.3	63.2	9.6	32.7	10.1	4.1
An independent media is important to the free flow of information	87.9	75.5	8.3	10.2	3.8	14.2
All citizens in a country should have equal rights and protections under the law	91.7	77.6	5.1	10.2	3.1	12.2
The Rule of Law is fundamental to a functioning democracy	88.5	75.6	7.0	14.3	4.5	8.1
Individuals and organizations have the right to free speech and to voice opposition	84.1	67.4	7.6	22.4	8.3	10.2
Democratic principles enhance the workplace	78.4	77.5	18.5	10.2	3.1	12.2

Total Sample: 157 Access participants, 49 peers

3. Pakistan

a. English Communication Skills

Similar to the results found in India, Access students reported significant changes in their English language skills from before their programs to the present (see Table 3.34). The girls in Lahore rated their skills more strongly than the boys prior to the Program, but reported significant improvements in multiple areas. The areas of greatest improvement were speaking and grammar, as in India, particularly for the male participants.

TABLE 3.34 Percentage of Students Reporting Their English Language Skills as Excellent or Good Pakistan				
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Country (%)
Speaking	Before Access	14.7	30.9	21.5
	Now – Current Students	92.0	100.0	95.4
Reading	Before Access	49.4	63.6	55.4
	Now – Current Students	100.0	98.2	99.2
Writing	Before Access	49.3	52.8	50.7
	Now – Current Students	90.6	98.2	93.9
Grammar	Before Access	18.7	40.0	27.7
	Now – Current Students	89.4	96.3	92.3
Understanding Spoken English	Before Access	41.4	50.9	45.4
	Now – Current Students	93.3	98.2	95.4

Total Sample: 130 Access participants

Almost all of the Access students interviewed in Lahore (93.1%) also reported that they shared what they learned in the Access classes with parents, peers and relatives. Pakistani parents reported that their knowledge of English had increased since their children began participating in the Access Program. Forty percent of the parents interviewed said that their English had increased very much or a great deal, compared to 18 percent who said that their knowledge of English had not changed at all.

As with the peer groups in India, the peers in Lahore reported that their Access friends had shared what they learned, with more of the boys reporting their friends had taught them something about English than the girls. Almost 70 percent of male peers said they had been taught something about English, compared to only 30 percent of female peers. Of those peers who said they had been taught something, many said it was English speaking, writing, reading or grammar (33.3%). The second most frequent answer was “about lifestyles” (27.8%). Most of the peers interviewed (81.3%) also said they practice English with their Access friends.

b. Knowledge of the United States

According to the Public Affairs Section staff in the U.S. Consulate, the Access students have a better understanding of the United States and its culture because of participating in the Access Program. Although some of the students reported having had some lessons on the United States at some time in their normal curricula (see Table 3.35), the Access Program in Lahore has made a big difference for many students, with 89.3 percent of boys and 98.2 percent of girls reporting that they learned something new about the United States through the Access Program.

TABLE 3.35 Percentage of Access Students with Prior Lessons about the United States Pakistan			
Topic	Male (%)	Female (%)	Country (%)
U.S. System of Government	22.7	21.8	22.3
U.S. Legal System	13.3	18.2	15.4
U.S. Culture and Values	24.0	29.1	26.2
U.S. Economic System	10.7	18.2	13.8

Total Sample: 130 Access participants

In spite of fewer students saying they had studied some aspect of the United States in a lesson in their regular studies, the Access students in Lahore reported that they had more knowledge of the United States than the Access participation in other South Asian countries. They also had more knowledge and understanding than their peers in Lahore (see Table 3.36).

TABLE 3.36 Changes in Participant and Peer Understanding and Knowledge of the United States Pakistan										
	Advanced Knowledge (%)		Beyond Basic Knowledge (%)		Basic Knowledge (%)		Less Than Basic (%)		No Knowledge (%)	
	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer
U.S. democracy	4.6	0.0	0.8	3.1	30.0	18.8	26.2	18.8	38.5	59.4
U.S. economy	2.3	3.1	6.9	3.1	27.7	28.1	23.8	12.5	39.2	53.1
U.S. values and culture	6.9	0.0	16.2	12.5	31.5	18.8	25.4	21.9	20.0	46.9
Religious and ethnic diversity	10.8	9.4	17.7	6.3	30.0	21.9	18.5	21.9	23.1	40.6
Freedom of speech/Press	16.9	0.0	14.6	12.5	36.2	21.9	11.5	25.0	20.8	40.6
Voluntary community service	16.9	9.4	10.8	9.4	31.5	12.5	16.2	21.9	24.6	46.9
Daily life in the U.S.	16.2	9.4	19.2	9.4	28.5	25.0	19.2	18.8	16.9	37.5

Total Sample: 130 Access participants, 32 peers

Those students who learned about the United States through the Access Program were asked to share to what extent their knowledge or understanding of the United States had changed due to the Access Program. Table 3.37 shows that the Access students in Lahore reported much bigger changes in their knowledge and understanding of the United States, which is surprising given that the teachers do not report spending significantly more time on lessons about the United States than those in other countries.

TABLE 3.37 Changes in Participants' Understanding and Knowledge of the U.S Due to Access Program Pakistan		
	Moderate to Substantial Change (%)	Minimal to No Change (%)
U.S. values and culture	76.9	23.1
Daily life in the United States	76.0	24.0
Voluntary community service	74.4	25.6
Freedom of speech and the press in the U.S.	74.3	25.7
Religious and Ethnic diversity in the United States	66.9	33.1
U.S. democracy	58.7	41.3
U.S. economy	58.7	41.3

Total Sample: 130 Access participants

Almost two-thirds of Pakistani parents (63.6%) thought that their children had learned about U.S. culture or society through the Access Program. When asked to cite examples, the parents said they learned about U.S. culture in general, and a few said they learned it was a developed country. A surprisingly large percentage of peers (44%) also said Access participants had shared information about the United States. The focus groups in Lahore also revealed what students said they had learned about the United States through the Access Program.

c. Community Awareness of the Access Program

The Access Program is not necessarily well known throughout Lahore, but it is known among the students, families, and neighborhoods served by the 114 schools that the CARE Foundation administers. Most of the Access teachers report that it is well known in the community, with one reporting it is very well known and another reporting it is not very well known. Half of the Access teachers in Lahore said that they have contact with community members other than parents, all Access advisory committee members. The students also had varying opinions about whether the Program is well known, with 34.7 percent of the boys and 52.7 percent of the girls reporting that it is and 66.0 percent of boys and 47.4 percent of girls saying it was not well known.

All of the peers interviewed in Lahore knew about the Access Program and knew someone in the Access Program. When asked what they thought their friends were learning in the Access Program, the peers reported four categories of answers: 1) English and computers (51.7%); 2) English and general knowledge (31.0%); 3) speaking English (13.8%); and 4) English and U.S. lifestyles (3.4%).

Some parents (33.0%) have been involved in Access activities in Pakistan. The majority of these (54.5%) said they had participated in an event at the school or center sponsored by the Access Program. Eight parents said they had observed Access classes. The teachers also reported that some parents serve on an advisory committee for the Program. A few parents also reported participating in U.S. Embassy/U.S. Consulate events through the Access Program.

d. Assessment of Democratic Values

Slightly more than a quarter of the students in Pakistan (18.7% of boys and 36.4% of girls) report that they have had lessons on democracy and civics as a part of their regular school curricula. In spite of fewer Access students reporting any lessons on democracy and civics, the Access students in Lahore showed the strongest support for democratic values in the South and Central Asia countries studied. The peers who were interviewed were not much different in attitude from the Access students except in two areas (see Table 3.38). The democratic value that the most Access students agreed or strongly agreed with was that of all citizens enjoying equal rights and protections under the law (96%), but that was the least supported by the peers (84%). Interestingly, the other case is that of free speech and right to voice opposition, which the peers supported the most (94%, tied with free and fair elections and democratic principles in the workplace), but only 87 percent of Access students agreed.

TABLE 3.38 Access Participants' and Peers' Responses on Statements Expressing Democratic Values Pakistan						
	Strongly Agree or Agree (%)		Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)		Strongly Disagree or Disagree (%)	
	Access	Peer	Access	Peer	Access	Peer
Voting is important because real decisions are made in elections	90.0	90.7	6.9	0.0	3.1	9.4
Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy	93.9	93.8	0.8	0.0	5.4	6.2
An independent media is important to the free flow of information	92.3	90.7	3.1	6.3	4.6	1.2
All citizens in a country should have equal rights and protections under the law	96.1	84.4	2.3	6.3	1.5	9.4
The Rule of Law is fundamental to a functioning democracy	94.6	87.6	3.8	6.3	1.6	6.3
Individuals and organizations have the right to free speech and to voice opposition	86.9	93.8	6.2	0.0	6.9	6.3
Democratic principles enhance the workplace	94.6	93.8	1.5	3.1	3.8	3.1

Total Sample: 130 Access participants, 32 peers

4 CONCLUSIONS

A. Effectiveness of the Program: Programmatic Goals

The English Access Microscholarship Program is highly effective in providing a significant English language learning experience to non-elite 14-18 year old students. This evaluation sought to assess the effectiveness of the Program on two levels: programmatic and legislative. This section details the effectiveness of the Access Program in meeting the following programmatic goals:

- Provide a significant English language learning experience to students in a cost-effective manner (approximately \$1,000 per student) to maximize the number of students reached by the Program.
- Provide direct English teaching to non-elite students living in underserved urban neighborhoods.
- Engage in the design and implementation of a transparent Access student selection process.
- Recognize student achievement through award certificates signed by the U.S. Ambassador.

1. Significant English Language Learning Experience

Although programs varied widely in the number of hours of instruction and their duration, most programs include two years of instruction ranging from 240 to 640 classroom hours. This length is deemed sufficient by Access local administrators and teachers to provide students with a significant learning experience and advance one or more levels in their English language proficiency. Access students surveyed are proud of their English acquisition, and mentioned that they could participate in English conversations, obtain better jobs, understand English-language websites, and apply to college or university due to their new ability.

The cost per student breakdown by country is shown in Table 4.2. The spread of per student cost between \$138 at one Indian site and the \$1,875 at two Oman sites is partially attributable to the type of in-country educational service provider employed, the facility infrastructure, student transportation costs, and the relative cost of living in the various countries.

TABLE 4.2 Cost per Student Breakdown by Country Fiscal Years 2004-2005						
	In-country Educational Service Provider	Fiscal Year	Per Student Cost	Length of Funding	Number of Students	Total Hours of Instruction
NEA Region						
Lebanon	AMIDEAST	2004	\$1,062	1 Year	200	200
		2005	\$1,062	1 Year	434	200
Morocco	AMIDEAST	2004	\$808	1 Year	96	120
		2005	\$808	1 Year	197	120
	American Language Center	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		2005	\$700	1 Year	376	150
Oman	Al-Buraimi College	2004	\$1,875	1 Year	280/year*	300
		2005	\$1,785	1 Year		320
	English Language Services	2004	\$1,875	1 Year		300
		2005	\$1,785	1 Year		320
	English Language Centre	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A
SCA Region						
Bangladesh	Language Proficiency Center	2004	\$1,000	2 Years	40	384
India	Anjuman-e-Himayath-e-Islam	2004	\$251	2 Years	60	382
		2005	\$146	1 Year	60	180
	Jamia Millia Islamia	2004	\$220	2 Years	100	382
	SPRAT	2005	\$138	1 Year	100	180
Pakistan	CARE	2004	\$1,000+	2 Years	150	640

*280 Omani students received scholarships in 2004 and 2005. This number was not divided by in-country educational service providers.

2. Intended Population

In all of the countries the evaluation team visited, the students served by the Access Program are considered to be non-elite by country standards. Most of the programs are based in underserved urban areas, with the exception of Morocco and Lebanon. While the Program in Morocco focused initially in Casablanca and Rabat, PAS Rabat has expanded the Program throughout the country reaching smaller cities like Meknes, as well as rural areas along the border with Algeria. Likewise, PAS staff in Lebanon are focusing on students in rural areas. Because Lebanon is a small country, they can reach many non-elite students outside of Beirut with relative ease. Thus far, the programs in the SCA region have remained in large cities—although there are plans to expand the program to smaller cities.

3. Student Selection Process

The Access Program has a transparent student selection process involving a written assessment of the applicant's writing skills, an entrance test, and/or an interview with the program administrator and teachers. In some cases, several programs maintain waiting lists of students who completed the assessment process but were not selected for the Program. Students from these lists are invited to join the Program if others are unable to complete the Program.

4. Award Certificates

Students in the countries surveyed in the SCA region received award certificates at the beginning of the program, while students in the countries surveyed in the NEA region receive their certificate at the completion of the program. In both cases, the award is signed by the U.S. Ambassador or his/her designee.

B. Effectiveness of the Program: Legislative Goals

The legislative goals relate to longer-term outcomes and impacts and are best captured some interval of time after the completion of the Program. However, during this evaluation data was gathered that provides preliminary information regarding effectiveness of the Program in meeting legislative goals. The legislative goals of the English Access Microscholarship Program, as set out in Chapter 1, are:

- Increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.
- Strengthen the ties that unite people of the United States with other nations.
- Promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement.
- Assist in the development of “friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world.”

1. Increase Mutual Understanding

Access students introduced to Americans and provided information about the United States during their participation in the Access Program are interested in learning more about the United States and Americans. Access students want more information about the U.S. government and U.S. society, culture and values. They admire the open society of the United States, the U.S. educational system, and U.S. technological advancements. Table 4.3 illustrates the percentage of Access students and alumni in this study who reported having basic to advanced knowledge of various aspects of the United States. Many participants expressed the hope that they might study in the United States at some point time in the future, or participate in U.S. exchange programs. They see learning English as the first step in the process.

TABLE 4.3 Access Participants Reporting Basic to Advanced Knowledge of the United States NEA and SCA Region		
	NEA Region (%)	SCA Region (%)
U.S. democracy	50.8	34.7
U.S. economy	64.3	35.3
U.S. values and culture	82.5	45.7
Religious and ethnic diversity in the United States	59.0	47.7
Freedom of speech and the press in the United States	76.2	51.5
Voluntary community service	45.9	43.6
Daily life in the United States	60.5	53.5

Total Sample: 271 NEA Access participants and 342 SCA Access participants

Some Access students said that the Program did not change their perceptions of the United States at all (11.9% in NEA and 30.1% in SCA), but among those whose perceptions did change, the aspect of the United States on which the largest percentage of students reported a change was U.S. values and culture (94.5% in NEA and 87.9% in SCA). Other areas showing substantial change were daily life in the United States (93.3% in NEA and 85.8% in SCA) and freedom of speech and of the press (83.4% in NEA and 86.6% in SCA).

A large number of participants report that they share what they have learned in Access classes with their siblings and friends. Several mention that they discuss it with their parents, and in a few cases, the parents ask what they have learned in their Access classes. In this way, the benefits of increased mutual understanding extend beyond the Access students to include their families and friends.

2. Strengthening Ties

Ties between the United States and other countries are frequently forged through building individual relationships. Students who live near U.S. Embassies, Consulates, and American Centers have been able to visit, meet, and engage in dialogue with Americans. Across all six countries, Access students reported their interest in meeting more Americans.

3. Promote International Cooperation for Educational and Cultural Advancement

The Access Program supports international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement through the choice of in-country educational service providers. The PAS staff and RELOs work directly with those institutions to create an environment in which students can access educational services previously out of their reach.

4. Assist in Developing Friendly, Sympathetic, and Peaceful Relations

The Access Program assists with the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and other countries. Access students, along with parents, siblings and peers, learn about the United States and have the opportunity to meet Americans, while learning English. One of the precepts of the Access Program is that participants will develop more favorable views of the United States. Access students interviewed for this evaluation reported an overall improvement in their perceptions of the American people and the United States.

An overwhelming 92 percent of Access respondents in Morocco and Lebanon said that their views of the American people had become more favorable or much more favorable because of their participation in the program (see Table 4.4). None of the Access participants in these two countries reported that their views towards the American people had become less favorable.

Table 4.4 Change in Views of U.S. Government and American People NEA Region					
	Much More Favorable (%)	More Favorable (%)	No Change (%)	Less Favorable (%)	Much Less Favorable (%)
U.S. Government	4.9	42.0	49.4	3.1	0.6
American people	46.0	46.0	8.0	0.0	0.0

*Total Sample: U.S. Government: 162 Access participants. This question was not asked in Oman.
American People: 163 Access participants. This question was not asked in Oman.*

Although students were a bit more ambivalent towards the U.S. Government, nearly half (47%) had a more favorable or much more favorable view after participation in the Access Program, and only small percentage of respondents (3.7%) said their perceptions had become less favorable or much less favorable as a result of their participation in the Program. In general, there is every indication that students feel their participation in the Access Program has led to more favorable attitudes towards the United States.

Table 4.5 illustrates the magnitude of the impact on the students in the SCA region, with 78.7 percent reporting that they view the U.S. Government more favorably and 84.5 percent reporting that they view the American people more favorably.

Table 4.5 Change in Views of U.S. Government and American People SCA Region					
	Much More Favorable (%)	More Favorable (%)	No Change (%)	Less Favorable (%)	Much Less Favorable (%)
U.S. Government	36.4	42.3	10.0	7.9	3.3
American people	47.7	36.8	7.9	5.0	2.5

Total Sample: 239 Access participants

C. PAS Program Management

One of the hallmarks of the Access Program is the significant flexibility Public Affairs Sections have in choosing the in-country educational service providers that are appropriate and relevant to local needs and conditions in the participating countries. This important factor contributes to the success of the Access Program.

D. In-country Educational Service Providers

The Access Program is based upon the professional knowledge the Public Affairs Sections have of in-country educational service providers, which include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), commercial language centers, universities, and schools. The in-country educational service provider, in many cases, is responsible for selecting the final curriculum, class structure, and the teachers. Therefore, the provider's knowledge of English teaching methods is extremely important to the quality of the Program.

The selection of the in-country educational service provider is important for other reasons, too. Most sites chosen for the Access schools and centers are centrally located and require only short travel distances for the participants (four kilometers or less). Morocco and Oman are exceptions in this regard. In Oman, the population density is so low that some students must travel up to an hour to participate in their classes. Morocco also has long travel distances, but it was an explicit choice to integrate students in classes in elite areas of the cities to expose them to life outside of their neighborhoods. Some of the Moroccan students travel up to an hour by bus to reach their Access classes.

E. High Quality English Teachers

Teachers are the linchpin in delivering quality instruction. The teachers' command of English and ability to create a student-centered classroom environment affect the learning experience. For many students, the Access Program is the first experience they have with a participatory classroom experience and critical thinking skills. Therefore, the Program fills an educational gap beyond English proficiency. However, in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Oman, the shortage of qualified and experienced English teachers was mentioned by the Program administrators, principals, PAS staff, and RELOs. Identifying qualified teachers will be very important for the Program's expansion in many countries.

F. Awareness of U.S. Government Sponsorship

The sponsorship of the Program—as a U.S.-funded program called English Access Microscholarship Program—is well-established in most centers and schools. Most students and parents were aware that the Access Program is funded by the U.S. Government. In some programs, students receive mugs, t-shirts, bags or baseball caps emblazoned with “Access Program” and refer to the program as, “Access” or “Access Program.” However, during the course of this evaluation, some students, teachers, and administrators reported that the Program was provided by the in-country educational service provider or by the government of their country.

G. Alumni Involvement

At the time of data collection, Morocco was the only Access Program that had alumni. A group of alumni in Morocco was in the process of forming an alumni association in order to maintain their connections with other students and teachers from the Access Program. In Bangladesh, the top 10 Access students in the first cohort received scholarships from the Language Proficiency Center (a commercial language center) to continue in the center's regular English classes. In all six countries, Access students and alumni stated their interest in maintaining their connection with other students and teachers from the Access Program and continuing to learn English.

H. Materials

The administrators and teachers emphasized the difficulty of finding age-appropriate material at a beginning language level. In all six countries evaluated, the providers reported that they invested significantly in purchasing supplemental materials or adapting the curriculum to be more relevant to the cultural context of students.

I. Access Students

From interviews with administrators, teachers, parents, all identified positive changes in the Access participants due to their participation in the Program. Self-confidence is the most evident of the changes cited, but administrators, teachers and parents also noted an increase in the curiosity and open-mindedness of the participants to new ideas and knowledge.

Across the board, Access students, teachers and parents reported that the Access students were also performing better in their regular classes because of their participation in the Program, particularly in their regular English class.

The educational and career opportunities that the Access Program creates for students are truly inaccessible to many of their peers. Access students have been accepted into universities, technical training programs, and some have entered careers that they had little hope of achieving without English language capability.

Another benefit some administrators cited was the socialization of male and female students who had never interacted before in one classroom. Administrators and teachers mentioned that for students to succeed in the workplace, they will need to be comfortable working near and/or with the opposite sex. For some students, the Access Program is the first opportunity they have had to talk informally to a member of the opposite sex other than a family member.

J. Families of Access Students

Parents reported that their Access students shared the knowledge they learned with them, as well as with their siblings and other family members. Parents of Access students have been more motivated to learn English because of the Access Program. An overwhelming 83.1 percent of the parents said that seeing the advancement of English in their children had inspired them to learn English. Their children have shared their skills as well; over 72 percent of Access students have taught English to their parents or family members. In some cases, sharing extended beyond English language to include information about the United States, and other class topics, such as higher education, jobs or careers. Some of the Program administrators also mentioned that the whole family's status might rise in the community because their children speak English well.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Expand the Access Program

This evaluation demonstrated the effectiveness of the Access Program in providing youth significant English language learning and increasing appreciation of U.S. culture and values in a cost-effective manner. This evidence provides compelling justification for expanding the Access Program beyond the current 44 countries and increasing the number of Access students worldwide.

B. Maintain Program Adaptability and Flexibility

Every Access school and center recommended that the Access Program maintain its flexibility in order to respond to the needs and constraints of the local communities. The Program's flexibility has been a hallmark since its inception and should be preserved in order to permit posts and administrators to custom-design locally-relevant components of the Program.

C. Continue Awareness of the U.S. Government Sponsorship

Consistent awareness of the U.S. Government sponsorship of the Access Program is important for meeting the mission and goals of the Program. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents should know that the Access Program is a U.S. government-funded program designed to improve English language skills and expose students to U.S. culture and values. Visits from the Ambassador, Foreign Service Officers, and other Americans to Access schools and centers foster heightened interest and enthusiasm among students, teachers, and administrators.

D. Continue to Encourage and Maintain Contact with Alumni

Wherever feasible, an Access alumni club or group should be established in each country. Over time, an online Access alumni network could be established. This would reinforce program awareness of U.S. Government sponsorship, help students who complete the Program maintain their English, and provide a sense of community to the students of the Program.

Some teachers in the SCA region are considering the use of Program alumni as teaching assistants. Access alumni can perform the role of mentors, may assist with the preparation of materials, distribution of materials, one-on-one mentoring or counseling, and may even present a story to the class or comment on a student's written work. Implementation of these ideas would help to keep the alumni in contact with the Access Program and expand on his or her knowledge of English.

E. Increase Training or Enhancement Workshops for Teachers

Many teachers expressed strong interest in participating in in-country in-service teacher training workshops on best practices and innovative U.S.-style teaching methods. Many teachers would benefit from additional exposure to U.S. culture and values, access to a kit of resource materials on the United States, and/or a video on life in the United States.

F. Begin Access Classes at Fourteen Years of Age

Give serious consideration to the timing of the Access Program and begin the Program at the ages of 14 to 15. In some cases, Access students ages 17 to 18 were studying for important

national exams, and absenteeism became a problem; some schools and centers suspended the Access classes until after the exams.

G. Utilize Existing Course Materials for Access Classrooms

The publications and materials available on the website of the *English as a Foreign Language Publication Catalog*—(<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/pubs>)—should be made known to the wider audience of Access teachers and administrators, as a supplemental resource.

H. Provide Opportunities for Cross-Fertilization of Programs

Public Affairs Officers and the Office of English Language Programs should arrange opportunities for Access programs to share their models, their challenges, and their successes. In addition, Access programs should encourage Access students to participate in future U.S. educational and exchange programs. Access students in Morocco and India have gone on to participate in the YES Program providing them the opportunity to live with an American family and attend a U.S. high school for a year. Although competition is intense for the YES Program, the success of a few Access participants buoyed the self-confidence of their classmates.

In addition, Access programs should continue to make the best use of all available DoS resources. In several cases, PAS staff have facilitated cooperation between the Access Program and the English Language Fellows (EL Fellows) Program. EL Fellows can assist programs in several ways, particularly in helping less experienced Access teachers master interactive teaching styles and acting as a cultural resource for those who would like more information about U.S. values and culture.

When Access programs are located within the vicinity of an American Center, Access participants should be invited to a showcase of the products and services of the Student Advising Center. In many cases, individualized student counseling with an Educational Advisor is available to students seeking in-depth information regarding higher education in the United States.

When there is an American Corner located at the site of the Access in-country educational service provider or within the vicinity, Access participants should be given a “tour” which introduces them to the available resources and, whenever possible, involves a visit from a U.S. Embassy representative.

I. Account for the Importance of Location of Access Schools and Centers

It is important that the Access classes be reasonably accessible to the intended population (i.e., non-elite youth) on foot or by public transportation. Teachers indicated that 30 minutes or less was a reasonable expectation. Schools or centers in underserved neighborhoods are ideally situated. In most instances, students are coming to the Access Program after regular classes and sometimes have to return home near dark. Transportation must be secure, timely, and affordable, with or without a subsidy. The in-country educational service provider should ensure that transportation is available and affordable for those students who may require it because of distance from the training site, the security situation in the neighborhoods traveled, or evening/night classes.

K. Consider a Monitoring and Evaluation System for the Access Program

To facilitate program administration, consider the development of a formal monitoring and evaluation system for the Access Program. This system could gather information regarding:

- Access student enrollment numbers
 - By age
 - By gender
- Access student retention rates
 - By age
 - By gender
- Number of Access teachers
- Ratio of Access teachers to Access students
- Special events for Access students
- Type and length of in-service training for Access teachers
- Teaching materials and textbooks
- Costs per Access student
- Total hours of instruction
- Length of instruction
- Name and location of in-country educational service providers

I define Access Program success as improving the life chances of individuals, helping them to become leaders who express positive attitudes towards the U.S. I see it as building bridges to other cultures and countering the anti-American feeling currently present in those cultures.

- American Center Director, Bangladesh